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REMINISCENCES OF OLD SCOTS FOLK

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REMINISCENCES OF OLD SCOTS FOLK

BY T. RATCLIFFE BARNETT

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BY R. GEMMELL HUTCHISON, R.S.A.

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TO

THE OLD SCOTS FOLK WHO

DELIGHT TO HEAR THEIR MOTHER

TONGUE, AND WHOSE HEARTS

STILL TURN TO THE LAND OF HOME

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CONTENTS

I. A Preacher of the Covenant in the Killing Times . . . . . *page* 1

II. Ordination in the Old Kirk with the Plain Face 13

III. Mary Roberts—Her Sampler 23

IV. The Ruined Mailing of Honeywalls . . 33

V. Ailie Gordon's Christening Robe, and a Piece of Bread and Cheese. . . . 43

VI. Heather Jock, the Gaberlunzie Man . . 51

VII. The Shadow among the Hills 59

VIII. Providence and the Press-Gang . . . 71

IX. Bridal in the Lammermoors 81

X. The Blind Gangrel 93

XI. Lady Hungry and the Kain Hens . . . 103

XII. The Last of the Old Scots Burial Customs. 113

XIII. Sacrament Sunday 123

XIV. The Old Doctor 131

XV. The Village Parliament 139

XVI. Summer Shielings in the Glen 149

CONTENTS

XVII. The Laird's Loft . . . . . *page* 159

XVIII. The Daft Days 167

XIX. An Old Coaching Inn 175

XX. The Grey Mother 185

XXI. The Hinmost Sleep 193

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

From Paintings by

R. GEMMELL HUTCHISON, R.S.A.

AILIE GORDON AND HER BAIRNS . . . . *Frontispiece*

EIDENT GRANNY . . . . . *page* 24
By kind permission of GEORGE GRAY, ESQ., J.P., Rutherglen.

IN THE HINMOST DAYS . . . . . „ 40

THE GUNDY MAN . . . . . „ 56
By kind permission of DAVID MITCHELL, ESQ., Edinburgh.

A LONESOME MEAL . . . . . „ 72
By kind permission of CHARLES R. BECKITT, ESQ., Glasgow.

THE APPLE OF HER EYE . . . . . „ 88

TO SLOCKEN THE THIRST. . . . . „ 120
By kind permission of R. S. BARCLAY, ESQ., Edinburgh.

THE BAIRNS' BAIRN . . . . . „ 152
By kind permission of CHARLES R. BECKITT, ESQ., Glasgow.

HALLOWEEN . . . . . „ 168

THE PATHOS OF LIFE . . . . . „ 200

CHAPTER ONE

A PREACHER OF THE COVENANT IN THE KILLING TIMES

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HE CAME OF GENTLEFOLK, THIS SAME John Blackader of Troqueer. For, he was of that namely family in Berwickshire which was far and widely kenned during the fifteenth century as the Black Band of the Blackaders. They were fell fighters and worried the Englishers to death again and again. It was old Cuthbert Blackader and his seven strapping sons who went bravely out to fight at Bosworth Field, all accoutred in their armour of fine-made steel and dour Scots courage. But, three of them fell with their doughty father, and only four returned in dool to the bonny Berwickshire merse. King James of Scotland, with a proper pride in their great adventures, gave leave to the living Blackaders to commemorate the dead, by carrying, for ever after, on their shields a red rose and a white—and to this day their crest is a right hand holding a sword, with this for a family text below: *Courage helps fortune.*

It was out of that siccar Scots fighting family, that John Blackader of Tulliallan, two centuries after, came—not to fight with sword and whinger, but to wage the better war of his Captain, Jesus Christ, in the killing times of persecution when the Blue Banner of the Covenant was dipped in the blood of the martyrs.

All through his wandering, hunted life you can hear the jingling of horses' bits, the clash of swords, and the thud of hoofs on the heather, as the redcoats ride down with a curse those clean-souled men with

their innocent wives and bairns whose memory to-day makes Scotland dirl with pride.

A patient, scholarly saint himself, he was settled at Troqueer in Dumfriesshire over a parish of wild, godless folk in 1653. But soon he cleansed his flock and his session from evil ways, and took inspection into their behaviour, until he garred them curb their profanity by the help of God's own grace. If old Cuthbert, the Berwickshire laird, was a captain of the foray, young John of Troqueer was a non-such Captain of Christ.

But, after nine years of this good gospel drill in the parish of Troqueer, John Blackader was outed with the rest for conscience and the Covenant.

He was off for the moors at the first sound of the galloping dragoons, determined henceforth to give his life to the wide, windy diocese of Scotland's outed folk, rather than bow the knee to the usurper of Christ's crown and Covenant.

Hear them, clattering up to the little whitewashed manse of Troqueer at two o'clock in the morning—these coarse-grained, red-coated soldiery, to whom the names of Sir James Turner, Auld Tam Dalzell of the Binns, and the Bloody Clavers himself were all in all. When they found that the brave man had gone, they wreaked their rage on his innocent wife and bairns.

The ruffians drag the wee ones from their warm beds and threaten with a curse to roast them alive. Stools and chairs are broken up with a dreadful smashery, and heaped in the yard to make a fire. One of the little lads is made to hold a candle in his

father's study, while a great dragoon throws down all the precious books from the cupboard to see if any of them are tainted with Whiggery. They stab all the beds and bedding through and through with their swords, in hope of finding the outed preacher. And while all this is going on inby, there are others who are outby wrecking the henroost, where they thraw the neck of every hen and leave the poor, harmless creatures lying dead on the cold clay floor.

It is then that one of the little bairns, wild with terror, creeps quietly out of the house in his shirt, and runs barefooted in the bogle-haunted night all the way to the Brigend of Mennihyvie, where he climbs the steps of the market cross and lies down, faint and forfochen, and sleeps.

Betimes, in the early morning, an old wife in a mutch comes out at her door and spies the wee white shivering bairn.

"Save us! What art thou?"

"I'm Mr. Blackader's son."

"O my puir bairn! What brocht ye here?"

"There's a hantle o' fearful men with red coats have burnt all our house."

"O puir bit thing! Come in, come in, and lie doon in my warm bed."

And the wee one was soon fast asleep between the blankets of old Widow Weir.

The other bairns, "bag and baggatch," were put into cadgers' creels and carried off to Dumfries, where, coming to the bridge in the early morn, one of them cried out in a perfect drollery of fright, "I'm banisht! I'm banisht!"

For, the old whitewashed, thackit-roofed manse was all alowe with fire, the precious personalities of the happy household were lying in a heap of ashes, black and burned, and the sound of the psalm would never be heard again round John Blackader's little family altar at Troqueer.

It was this that clinched the faith of many a douce Scots presbyter more than anything else—the breaking and burning and banishing of his own family roof-tree in the name of a king and a council that flouted Christ and cursed His children with an oath.

So John Blackader, the faithful but cautious preacher of the Covenant, felt the blood of old Cuthbert of the Black Band running hot within him that day, as he fled for the moors which were for fifteen years to be his only home.

Galloway, Ayrshire, Lanark, and the Lothians, with trips to the Borders and Fife—he was known in every glen and on every hillside wherever the huddled flock of Christ gathered for prayer and praise. His pony carried him everywhere. When, in times of danger, he had to leave it at some farm place and take to the wilds, he would walk or crawl over the peat bogs and heather from place to place.

See him, skulking from one moss dub to another, as he sees the figure of a man coming over the brow of the moor, looking this way and that on the dull wintry afternoon. Then the sound of a well-known voice actually singing a psalm in that danger zone, and John Blackader runs across the heather to his friend in exile.

"It is Alexander Peden himself!"

And with that, the two great men meet.

"What news?" says Blackader, as he surveys the weird, dreamy-looking figure standing on the moor before him.

"Waesome news, John—waesome news! For Clavers and his men are out on the hill this very day after the Lord's anointed. There have been more murderings in Galloway, and a wee bit laddie was shot upby yestreen. Lord, how long, how long? But God is our Refuge and our Strength."

The two preachers knelt down in the heather, which was wringing wet with rain, and prayed for the cause of Christ in the land. Were not their hearts bleeding for many of their martyred friends? Then they sat and talked for a long time of many things, forgetting in their eagerness where they were.

"Eh! what was that?" said Blackader.

"Methought I heard the tramp of a horse," replied Peden, with a calm unconcern, as he looked round the moor.

"Ay—quick. There they are. They have seen us. They are galloping this way!"

It was Clavers and his men on Peden's track at last.

But the prophet only closed his eyes, and kneeling calmly down, began to pray again in the peathag.

"O Lord, who hast never failed them that lippen to Thee, cast the lap o' Thy cloak over puir auld Sandy."

And the mist came down, and shrouded the moor in its thick white folds.

They heard the jingling of the horses' bits, and the sound of the men cursing the poor brutes that kept

stumbling into the peaty sludge in the mist. Once Clavers' own voice was raised in command quite close to them. But the two preachers never moved in their hiding-place. Then the sounds grew fainter as the dragoons rode farther and farther away. And when the mist lifted John Blackader saw the glint of the sun on a helmet far down the glen.

See him again in the Lothians, with headquarters in Edinburgh and a good horse always at hand.

It is a summer Sunday at Hill o' Beath in Fife. John Dickson is with him, and at eight o'clock in the morning he stands up to preach to the great assemblage. The long service is finished by eleven o'clock in the forenoon. Then a second one begins, and while John Blackader is speaking a young lieutenant of militia rides up, dismounts, and listens. But it is a composing and winsome address, and there is nothing to haggle over. The lieutenant mounts again, amid some show of resentment, and rides off. The news goes round that John Blackader is in danger of arrest. The boatman at Queensferry refuses him a passage in the evening. So, utterly wearied with the long day's work, he mounts his horse and rides away by Stirling through the night, continuing by Linlithgow to Edinburgh, which he reaches before the kitchen fires are lit in Auld Reekie. Sixty miles from dusk to dawn!

At Paisley he preaches to twelve hundred souls. At Fenwick he lies in hiding at death's door for sixteen weeks, for his hardships in the open are many and severe. Yet he never girns at Providence, this good soldier of Christ's Crown and Covenant.

At Livingston and Linlithgow we hear soughs of him holding conventicles. For the faithful folk smelled him out wherever he was, despite his caution. He would preach in snowy moors with nothing but a chair from a herd's kitchen to stand on, while the devout folks pulled bunches of heather from the hillside and sat on them in the snow.

It is on the bleak hills round Torphichen we see him flying one day from the horsemen of Bloody Tam Dalzell. The going is rough for his little beast, and on his way he finds a woman running for her life with a baby wrapped in a shawl.

"What ails ye, my woman?"

"The red-coats hae killed my man; but they winna get my wee bit bairn. O Lord, whither can I flee wi' him?"

"Lay him in that whin bush, and jump up with me."

So she laid the bairn down, all wrapped in a shawl, in the middle of a great whin bush, and rode off with the preacher. They soon reached a farm where a true son of the Covenant took charge of the horse and hid the two fugitives in a safe place.

Next morning, when danger was past, the woman went early to the whin bush, and there—sleeping sound and cosh—she found her babe unharmed.

That day John Blackader held a conventicle on a little green hill near Torphichen. The sentries were placed on the high points to the north and south and east and west, and down in a hollow many mothers brought their bairns after sermon to the baptism. Among them was the woman whose little babe had

slept all night in the whin bush. There they were all baptized by the same name of John, after the great preacher of the Covenant. And the little green hill is called Johnshill to this very day.

Later on he ventured down to the ancient seaport town of Borrowstounness, which even then was old in history and tradition. There he preached and baptized twenty-six bairns. But ere the conventicle was over Dalzell of the Binns and his butcher dragoons were on their way from Blackness to arrest the preacher. His son Adam was with him, and was taken prisoner by some soldiers, who told him he would be thrown into a dungeon in Blackness Castle that was full of puddocks and toads. John Blackader himself, now almost crippled with rheumatic pains, escaped by the merest chance. For, despite the rheums and weaknesses of approaching age, he had to climb dykes and plunge through hedges and scramble in the dark from one backyard to another, till he managed to gain the braes and cow parks above the town. There he found shelter in a barn all night.

The very last conventicle he held was at Newhouse Moor, near Livingston, in the year 1681. Then, full of rheumatics and almost blind with the constant glare of the sun and exposure, he retired to a house in Edinburgh. The Council summoned him for trial, and one April day of that same year the officers of the Council climbed the stairs of his house in the High Street and seized him.

It was the beginning of the end for John Blackader, as it had been for many another preacher of the Covenant in the Killing Times. A voyage down the stormy

waters of the Forth to the Bass Rock, and there he was confined for five years, with the seamaws screaming every day about him, and other faithful martyrs of the Cross lying in the cells beside him.

Then, release from all his troubles, and a resting-place beneath the shadow of Berwick Law, where, with some others who loved the Blue Banner, he awaits the coming of his Lord in a neuk of the old kirkyard.

CHAPTER TWO

ORDINATION IN THE OLD KIRK WITH THE PLAIN FACE

CHAPTER TWO: ORDINATION IN THE OLD KIRK WITH THE PLAIN FACE

THAT YEAR WE HAD AN INDIAN SUMmer, and Fairshiels in October was a painted pastoral of russet and gold. It was well that the twentieth of the month was fair, for long before the sun was high the village folk were all astir in expectation of the first arrivals. The day of ordination in a country kirk is still, by the mercy of Heaven, a great and holy day. The village bustles with unwonted life, the schoolbairns have a holiday, and the old folks, in their doorstep collogues, have been reminding each other all morning of the far-off days which are still sanctified with memories of this one and that who were ordained to the holy office of shepherding the flock of Christ in this same clachan of Fairshiels.

At last, long before the hour of service, the first of the hillmen begin to arrive, some on foot, with sheep dogs at their heels, some in gigs, with the goodwife by their side; and at the sight of them the blood of the Covenant flows quicker in the veins of those of us who have been begotten of men and women who kept the faith and told their children the austere tale of Christ's Kirk in Scotland and her blood-bought peace.

In the quiet manse garden, at the back of the kirk, the young minister stands and looks wistfully across the rolling eastland country, which lies like the Garden of the Lord, sleeping in the mellow October sunshine, betwixt him and Lammerlaw. Here, he is to find his life-work. Here, in this sequestered parish at the foot of the hills, after seven long years of scholastic preparation, and a later probation of work in city churches, he has been called of God to take charge of

a handful of plain, silent, country folk. But the Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, and that man alone is worthy who measures the things that are Eternal by the measure of the angel, and not by the measure of a man.

Soon the members of the local Presbytery arrive, having driven nine good Scots miles uphill from the county town. A Presbytery is like the world, made up of all sorts and conditions of men. There are one or two white-haired ministers who carry with them an old-world air of courtesy wherever they go. There are wise-looking ecclesiastics, with a flavour of Assemblies about them, who are for ever clearing their throats to ask questions on points of order. There is the Doctor of Divinity, with the far-ben look on his ascetic face, and on whom the burden of his erudition sits lightly like a flower. But most of them are humane, rosy-faced pastors who are faithful to their Master in quiet places, and who know to a penny how much Glenshiels got for his oats or what Westmains paid for his lambs. Add to these a handful of younger ministers, some of whom wear very long coats, and are even now seriously exercising themselves about city pulpits before they know the names of all the bairns in their first charge.

The white-haired Presbytery clerk—that man of punctilios, whose chief duty in life is to tell moderators what to do—is master of the ceremonials for the day.

But the chief interest of the village folk centres neither in him nor in the nervous young minister, last ordained, who is to preach for the first time before the

Presbytery, nor yet in the experienced pastor who is to ordain and give the charges. All interest centres in the new minister and his friends.

The village wiseacres feast their eyes on the constant stream of strangers who have come from the city, and driven up the hill road to the lonely hamlet of Fairshiels on this calm October day. Those were the tranquil days, of blessed memory to some of us, long before the country roads were secularised with the dust and distemper of motor-cars. Brakes, traps, carriages, and carts crept slowly up the Tunnel Brae, as we call it, or came up from East Lothian, or over Soutra from Lauderdale, and drew up with a clatter of hoofs in front of the Old Kirk with the Plain Face which stands at the back of the village. For it is the good home-spun philosophy of every Scot that it is with kirks as it is with women—the plain-faced ones have often the best hearts, but those with the bravest exteriors of beauty and architecture are whiles but a snare for debt and difficulties unforeseen. So the sun-lit roadway is filled with a bustling crowd of gentles and simples, who, after many friendly greetings, pass into the cool silence of the ancient sanctuary.

Without, the red rowans glisten in the sun at the manse gate and over the churchporch. The still, warm airs of October are honey-laden and fragrant with the scent of the village gardens. The far horizon of hills is dim and blue and elusive under a cloudless sky, and the little robins, those Birds of the Cross with the blood-red breasts, are singing in plaintive notes their farewell song of the year.

Within, all are assembled now in the crowded kirk

to worship God and to set the shepherd over the sheep, as has been done by all the generations of pious Scots presbyters since the days when Knox and Melville wrested the liberties of a people's faith from the meddling hands of priests and kings.

After prayer, the people rise to join with one accord in singing the Gathering Psalm to the tune of *Harrington*:—

I joyed when to the house of God,
Go up, they said to me.
Jerusalem, within thy gates
Our feet shall standing be.

And so long as our Kirk in Scotland includes those who that day were among the upstanding worshippers in Fairshiels Kirk, douce country folk, labouring men and women, shepherds from far herdings, farmers and their wives, business men from the city, the local laird, and the little bairns—just so long will Christ's Kirk prosper in our land.

When the preaching is over, the young minister stands to hear those searching questions which for ever commit him, of his own free will and sincerity, to the ministry of Christ among men, and somewhere, in a back seat, the mother heart that bore him gives thanks to God that she has seen this day.

Thereafter, he kneels in the midst of the upstanding ministers, while the Moderator offers up the dedication prayer. And this is the most mystic act of simplicity in all our presbyterial ritual of ordination. For, at these solemn words: *Send down, we beseech Thee, the Holy Spirit upon Thy servant, whom we, in Thy Name, do now with the laying on of hands ordain to the office of the holy ministry*, each minister silently

steps forward and lays a gentle hand on the bowed head of the new-made shepherd of God's sheep. Kneeling there, with a holy circlet of ordaining hands resting as one upon his head, the servant of the Lord realises with a strange uplift of soul that this is the symbol of God's own Hand Unseen! Hidden as in a cloud of witnesses, stricken in the soul with the thought of his own unworthiness, and wrapt about with a solemn sense of the Actual Presence, he is set apart for ever as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And only those who themselves have knelt in the midst of that encircling band of holy men, and have been weighted with such awful sanctity by the laying on of hands, can ever realise the depths of the responsibility of the Ordination Vow.

It is with many a yearning prayer that the old folks see their young minister rise from his knees to receive the right hand of fellowship from his fellow-presbyters. It is with attentive ears that they listen to the fervent words which are addressed to him and to them on their duty to one another and to God. And at the close of the simple service, what praise can Scots men and women sing but the Second Paraphrase, that song of the soul which is associated with every one of our outgoings into life!

O God of Bethel! by whose hand
Thy people still are fed;
Who through this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led:
Our vows, our prayers, we now present
Before Thy throne of grace:
God of our fathers! be the God
Of their succeeding race.

The Second Paraphrase is the Scotsman's benediction. As the singing rises and falls to the tune of *Salzburg*, many a grey-haired son of the Covenant sees dead faces living again in the straight-backed pews round about him, and many a soft-faced mother sings the well-beloved words with wet eyes, as she too remembers some who went out on the perplexing path with wandering footsteps from her very side, to the singing of this same traveller's song—and never returned.

When the last line has been sung, and the Benediction has been said, the young minister stands at the kirk door and shakes hands with every man, woman, and child who has been to the Throne of Grace with him that day. Soft hands and horny hands, little hands and great, he receives them all, and with them, a good Scots welcome from the heart—silent, grippy, leal.

. . . . . .

Late that night, when the last wheels had rumbled away, and the lights of the candles in the old wooden candlesticks were all put out in the grey-walled kirk which loomed against the sky, like a silent witness to the vows he had taken, the minister walked round his garden in the moonlight—alone. Those who had given him life and love were sitting within the lamp-lit manse; and scattered far and wide over the sleeping country were those whom God had that day given him to lead through the green pastures and beside the still waters. The silence and the moonlight were wonderful to him. But, as he stood and listened, the bleat of a wandering sheep, far up on the lonely hills, fell on his ear. In a moment, that plaintive sound

became the message of God to his soul. And, bowing his head in the moonlight, he determined that, by the help of Heaven, he would henceforth seek the lost lambs, and shepherd the wandering sheep.

CHAPTER THREE

MARY ROBERTS—HER SAMPLER

FIDEN: GRANNY

CHAPTER THREE
MARY ROBERTS — HER SAMPLER

THERE LIES BEFORE ME IN THE LAMP-light an open portfolio, with five-and-twenty old samplers in it, and I have only to close my eyes to catch a glimpse of the long ago.

. . . . . .

It is summer-time, and the air is full of the scent of lavender, rosemary, and blood-red roses, that nod in the corners of an old garden. Through the open lattice window of a low-roofed cottage float the dulcet notes of a spindle-legged spinnet, and in the cool shade of a beech tree on the lawn there sits a little girl, with her canvas and her silks, sewing her sampler.

She has nearly come to the end of her labours, for this is the line that she is slowly stitching now: *Mary Roberts finished this Sampler, March 1760, aged 10 years.* And above the wilderness of mathematical trees and shrubs there is sewn with an infinite care this motto:—

Jesus, permit Thy gracious name to stand
As the first effort of an infant hand,
And while her fingers on the canvas move
Engage her tender thoughts to seek Thy love,
With Thy dear children let her have a part
And write Thy name Thyself upon her heart.

Many a time had little Mary shed tears of vexation under the beech tree on the lawn, when the needle persisted in going astray, and the dreamy sound of the spinnet tempted her to lay down her work on the grass, that she might lose herself in a summer dream of the green-robed fairies that folk said had their dwelling in the glen above the village. But when she was just beginning to enjoy the dreams of a drowsy summer after-

noon, her Conscience came walking down the garden-path between the gillyflowers and roses in the shape of a high-waisted lady in lilac and white, with a French grammar in her hand. Then poor little Mary would start in her dreaming and begin the dreary stitching again, until she came to think that governesses and samplers were the most weary-wailly things on earth.

Then the years passed by. The lady in lilac and white had vanished for ever. *Mary Roberts* still sat under the beech tree on the summer afternoons, but she was old and frail, and the hair that had once been so golden was now as white as snow. There was little or no change in the garden. The scent of lavender and roses still drugged the air. The sound of the spinnet, only a little fainter and mellower, came through the open window as it had done long, long ago. But *Mary Roberts* was dozing in her chair, and another golden-haired child was sitting on a stool by her grandmother's feet, sewing an altogether different sampler in light-coloured silks.

As she sews she wonders if she will be able to do it as well as her grandmother did hers. For the greatest pleasure to the child is to get up on a chair in the parlour of the cottage and gaze on a faded sampler that is framed in rosewood above the spinnet, with this legend at the foot: *Mary Roberts finished this Sampler, March 1760, aged 10 years.*

. . . . . .

Old samplers tell us many a tale of how our great-grandmothers lived. They must have been eident bairns. For the average age at which a sampler was wrought was ten years, and many of these show a pro-

ficiency in needlework which a child of ten years of age to-day would look upon with open-eyed wonder. To work a sampler, however, in the olden times was as essential to the education of a girl as learning to read or write.

Moreover, a sampler was often a kind of Family Tree—for when a child had finished her sampler proper, it was usual to work in the initials of her nearest relatives on any clear space that was left—the father's family coming first. This was accounted a work of especial honour to the relatives, and the initials of those who were dead were worked in black worsted. Here, for example, is the sampler of little *Ann Watt*, 1785. We can make out six different initials—I W: I S: I W: H W: M W: I W—each with a crown sewn above. And this great elaborately silk-sewn sampler of *Jessie McFarlane*, aged 13, 1856, which was picked up in a lumber store as black as coal, and cleaned, as delicate samplers ought to be, with bread crumbs and soft crusts, contains a whole genealogy of thirteen initials—A M F: M M F: M M F: A M F: A M F: J M F: J M F: F J M F: J B: T B: M B: J T: A T. And this other was worked by little *Marion Teviotdale*, an orphan girl in Donaldson's Hospital, whose parents' initials are worked in pathetic black, side by side with those of her matron and teachers.

Every bairn had to work, at least, the letters of the alphabet and the numerals. Then came a border round the whole. After that, the sampler might be elaborated to any extent. Here are figures of all kinds of animals—dogs, stags, peacocks, and birds. The dogs, to be sure, could neither bark nor bite; the stags

could never have run ten yards on these legs; and the birds have an invariable habit of sitting on the topmost branch of a conical tree. But what of that? The stitches are perfect, and the sewing of the stag's horns redeems the shilpit beast itself.

Our great-grandmothers were theological before they were in their teens. They were bred on oatmeal, the Catechism, and a few other simplicities. So the serpent of Eden is a very common ornamentation of the sampler. Supplest of all crawling creatures, it invariably coils itself round the forbidden tree like a corkscrew, while Adam and Eve stand by, one on either side, as if they were having their photographs taken, and had nothing whatever to do with apples. Moreover, the Adam and Eve of the samplers are so like one another that we can never tell which to blame!

Here again is a map of England worked by *Ann Hope* in 1777. Every county is named, with parts of France and Ireland and Scotland as well. Round the coast sail nineteen three-masted schooners all going the same way, favoured by the same wind, and each flying an ensign of prodigious size over the counter. There is a vast amount of stitching on this piece, with four hundred names, and all the lines of latitude and longitude quite correctly marked. Surely *Ann Hope* was a weary wee bit lass, sitting at the top of her geography class, when she had finished that sampler!

And this of *Marget Sanderson* in 1815 shows us that she was a dweller in rural parts with garden pleasaunces when the guns of Waterloo were booming over Europe! For, in her representation of peacocks, she invariably makes the young bird stand on the parent

bird's back. This is the distinct chronicle of a fact in the natural history of these bonny birds. But although her natural history is correct, how deliciously crazy are her notions of the sea and ships! Here is a cutter that ought never to have been launched, with a sail which an admiral would find it ill to unfurl! But what matter? *Marget Sanderson's* mellow silken-sewed sampler to-day is a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.

But the mottoes are even more interesting than the figures. A motto or a text was essential to the sampler proper.

Here is *Jane Craig's* motto:—

Know thou this truth, enough for man to know,
Virtue alone is happiness below.

Christina James chose these two sober texts:—

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding.

. . . . . .

I love them that love Me, and those that seek Me early shall find Me.

A little lass who had too much modesty to sew her own name on her sampler had at least enough serious humour to choose as her motto this:—

When I was young and in my prime
You see how well I spent my time,
And by my sampler you may see
What care my parent took of me.

Parent in the singular tells us very quaintly that in olden times a mother took a personal and painstaking oversight of her girl's sewing and education.

Here, surely, is a pathetic touch on the sampler of *Mary Strang*! Like all little maids, Mary fixed a date

to her sampler. Then the years flew by, and she grew into womanhood. What she was like, who she was, and what kind of romance she had—these things we shall never be able to tell. It is better so. But *Mary Strang* never changed her name. And still as the years passed over her head, she began to notice that the eye of the curious sometimes strayed to the date on her pretty sampler as it hung in a rosewood frame on her parlour wall. And *Mary Strang* was grieved. So, to confound the tongues of gossip, she carefully picked out the last two figures in the date, and left it standing thus: 18—. Ah, *Mary Strang*, it is all one now! But we love the lonely old lady for her human sensibilities, and we respect her reticence as we look on her sampler hanging on the wall.

At what period exactly samplers were first worked we cannot say. But the oldest in the portfolio is dated 1655—an elaborate piece of embroidery with a bit of Celtic interlacing in the centre. There is no name, but the beautiful needlework speaks for itself.

At the very bottom of the portfolio there used to be two or three old *Lace Samplers* which are of quite a different nature from the ordinary child's sampler. Now these lace samplers hang proudly on the staircase wall in tiny rosewood slips. Each is done in four little squares, which show special lace stitches or various styles of solid darning with fine linen.

Two of them are by *Marion Teviotdale* of Donaldson's Hospital, and two of them are by that same *Ann Watt* who, in 1785, worked the sampler with the peacocks carrying their young. It is very plain from this later lace work that *Ann Watt*, as she grew up, threw

her whole heart into her needlework. Probably these four fragments of infinitely fine lacework were put together and bound in blue and pink ribbons without any thought of their value. But in the twentieth century they have stood in a glass case at a great National Exhibition with crowds of nimble-fingered modern women gazing at them and wondering how the mortal fingers of the little ladies ever put them together.

. . . . . .

But no longer do little lasses sit working samplers in sweet-scented gardens under the trees. We shall never hear the tinkle of an old spinnet again. Times have changed, and the cottage garden where *Mary Roberts* sat in the sun is all built over. Meadow Lodge, to which *Ann Watt* came as a sweet, happy bride, with her samplers carefully folded in a corner of her bridal chest, no longer stands with its windows gleaming in the dawn as the sun rises over Salisbury Crags. But still a sough of those old, far-off, forgotten days comes down the years like a lover's song that is sung at gloaming among the graves. I can hear it as I sit in the gloom of this summer eve, with the warm flower-scented winds coming in at the open window and flickering the lamplight as it falls on a little red box.

It is the workbox which *Ann Watt* gave to her little daughter Eliza!

A tiny square red morocco case, with a raised lid, all a-gleam with dim stampings of gold, like a royal casket, seven inches long, five inches broad, and four inches high! That is all. But it gives us clearer visions of the Little Lass that sewed the sampler than anything else. Add to it, four gilt claw feet, two little

gilt rings at each side for handles, a gilt lock and key, and below the keyhole another gilt ring to pull out a shallow drawer in front. Inside, it is all lined with pale blue figured silk—oh, so faded now! Little square trays for holding bobbins and buttons; a tiny mother-of-pearl thimble rimmed with gold; two red morocco needlecases, one of which is only an inch and a half long; a pincushion; two miniature reels with gold silk on the one and grey-green on the other; some pearly baby buttons; and one old letter with a faded brown address—that is all!

But the whole precious morsel is fragrant with a sweet, old-world perfume which all the money in the world would never buy. So, with the little Red Box and the old Samplers before me, I have only to close my eyes in the lamplit room, and I hear again the sound of the spinnet, with *Mary Roberts* singing to herself in the flowery garden as she sits sewing under the trees. It is a whiff of fragrance from the long ago come to sweeten the airs of our over-throng present-day world.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RUINED MAILING OF HONEY-WALLS

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"By the wee birchen corries lie patches of green,
Where gardens and bare-headed bairnies have been,
But the huts now are rickles of stones nettle-grown,
And the once human homes, e'en their names are unknown.

. . . . . .

Oh hearts to the hills of old memory true!
In the land of your love there are mourners for you.

. . . . . .

For, the stillness they feel o'er the wilderness spread
Is not Nature's own silence, but that of the dead;
E'en the lone piping plover, and small corrie burn,
Seem sighing for those that will never return."

"NO—THEY WILL NEVER RETURN!" SAID the minister, as he sat in the sunshine of an October afternoon by the great tree that overshadows the ruined mailing of Honeywalls.

He had a large white paper in his hand. It had come by the morning post, and he had been in a dwam of distress ever since. For it was an official return from the headquarters of the Kirk, with a long series of questions about the population of the parish, the membership of the kirk, the number of schools for the young, the siller and the stipend, and a whole clanjamfrey of statistics which raised alarm in the soul of this man whose lot had been cast in those silent, wind-blown places where the Kingdom of God is as a grain of mustard seed.

But though the minister had small equipment for the mathematics of the Kingdom, he had been blessed with an understanding heart, a poet's eye, and a hungry love for the souls of the plain men and women whom God had given to him.

The white paper, he knew, would be welcomed in the great kirks of the city, where the office-bearers would fill in the money columns with a stound of pride, smiling to themselves when the figures ran into thousands.

But in Fairshiels there are no statistics. And although the minister sought eagerly for something with which to make a brave show opposite the questions, he could only find a few unprintable visions.

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He saw, first of all, his own kirk, lit with lamps and candles to illumine the darkness for but sixty or seventy worshipping men and women and bairns, who stood up with an old-world reverence to sing the psalms, while the ghosts of their forebears haunted them in crowds from the shadows of the high-pitched roof. And then he saw an old, cleanly built man in spectacles poring over a little money-column notebook, bound in worn yellow sheepskin, as he made up the year's offerings in his lamp-lit kitchen with a very scratchy pen.

That was the order of the present-day kirk in Fairshiels.

And then, as his eye fell on the ruins of Honeywalls before him, steeped in the mellow autumn sun, other visions of other days began to crowd upon him, one after another, until in the dead silence of the sunlit fields he could have wept at the thought of the generations that were gone.

. . . . . .

He saw an old bent woman, dressed in a poke bonnet and a Paisley shawl, creeping out of the door of

Honeywalls into the trim garden on a summer Sabbath morn long, long ago. She stooped down and plucked a sprig of appleringie and placed it in her Bible. Then she folded her snow-white kerchief over the Holy Book. It was old Grizzel Spence.

The Paisley shawl had been a gift from the Laird. For was she not the Laird's own foster-mother? Now she lived within the policy of Hamilton Hall with John Spence, her son, who kept the gardens and the great holly hedges that were the pride of the ancient place. The central chimneys of the great house rose but a stone's-throw behind the hedges, and the scent of the honeysuckle which smothered the cottage walls —and indeed had given it the name of Honeywalls— drugged the warm airs of the Sabbath morn like the fragrance of incense.

One after the other John Spence's bairns trooped out into the cottage garden dressed in their kirk-going clothes. Then John Spence himself, in his hodden-grey homespun, with his wife in her best bombazine, marshalled the little army of worshippers, and three generations from one humble roof-tree set off for the kirk that could be seen standing on the brow of the hill fornent the clachan of Fairshiels.

. . . . . .

Again the vision changed, and he saw the great white-walled Hall itself, sleeping in the sun, with its two square gardens surrounded by immense holly hedges. In one of them stood an ancient sundial of chiselled stone within a cloistered pleasaunce where four grassy walks met. York and Lancaster roses nodded in the heat about the house at every corner,

and an old stone draw-well, covered with sweetbrier, stood in the grass before the door. Mounting the steep flight of steps, he passed through the square hall and went slowly up the beautiful polished cedar staircase, to wander at will through the wainscoted rooms. Some were hung with dull green tapestries, on one of which a picture of St. Paul shaking the viper from his hand into the fire was dimly woven. Here, a great fresco of fighting figures adorned a wall; there, Italian landscapes were painted on the panellings. Round about the old grates were quaint Dutch tiles, one set of which set forth the story of Joseph and his brethren. And from an upper window he looked out and saw a bell hung in curiously wrought ironwork above a gateway leading to an inner courtyard, whereon were engraven the initials and date: T. H.—1745. It had been erected by the Laird, Thomas Hamilton, in the very year that Bonny Prince Charlie took lunch over yonder with young Anderson of Whitburgh, who led the Jacobite army by a way he knew through the morass at Prestonpans.

And now, on this old-time Sabbath morn, the Laird passed out of the doorway and down the steps with his only daughter, little Elizabeth Hamilton. Who could have foretold that after many years this little lass would set aside the wishes of her father and ride off with her cousin, John Dalrymple, to be wed in the wood at Cranstoun downby!

But on this Sabbath morn the little lady went tripping along in a Leghorn hat, a high-waisted gown of sprigged muslin with a sash and frill, and a pair of silver buckled shoes very kenspeckle. Her hand was in

her father's, and when they passed through the policy gate on the great London road, the country folk were already flocking to the preaching in the old kirk on the brae.

Some walked in friendly coteries of twos and threes, the women kilting their coats carefully on the dusty road, the men striding slowly on with sheep-dogs trotting at their heels, while here and there a cart came rumbling along, full of old feeble folks and little bairns. Others—the thrifty ones—who had crossed the hill on the moor with bare, bootless feet, sat down on the mossy banks and put on their shoes and stockings with modest care before entering the village.

And when, at last, a white-haired minister, in black gown and gloves and snowy bands, stood up to preach, the kirk was crowded with men, women, and bairns, some even sitting on the seat-backs or standing in the passage about the doors for want of space—four hundred souls, singing *Bangor* or *Eastgate*; while the sound of the psalm floated out at the open kirk doors, and startled the cushies on the great ash trees where they sat dovering in their noontide sleep.

. . . . . .

It was all in the heartsome long ago, when the London and Lauder and Edinburgh coaches ran merrily one after the other up and down the turnpike, and the little farm towns were full of happy families, and the country blacksmiths and thatchers and snabs were all throng with work, and the spinning wheels were taken out on the summer afternoons by eident housewives, who spun all the wool for the goodman's coats and the little bairns' trews. The meal mills of

Soutra and Sleepy Hollow, and the barley mill at Saltoun; the great crowded inn of Fairshiels, where many horses champed the bit in stable and yard; the summer milkings on the high green hill pastures, and the cosy collogues round hundreds of kitchen fires in winter-time—all that happy bustle of a crowded countryside is gone. We hear tell of it now only from a few old done folks who dander about the doors in fine weather and live on the memory of dead things. To hear them speak is like listening to the plaintive, far-away sough of an old Scots song.

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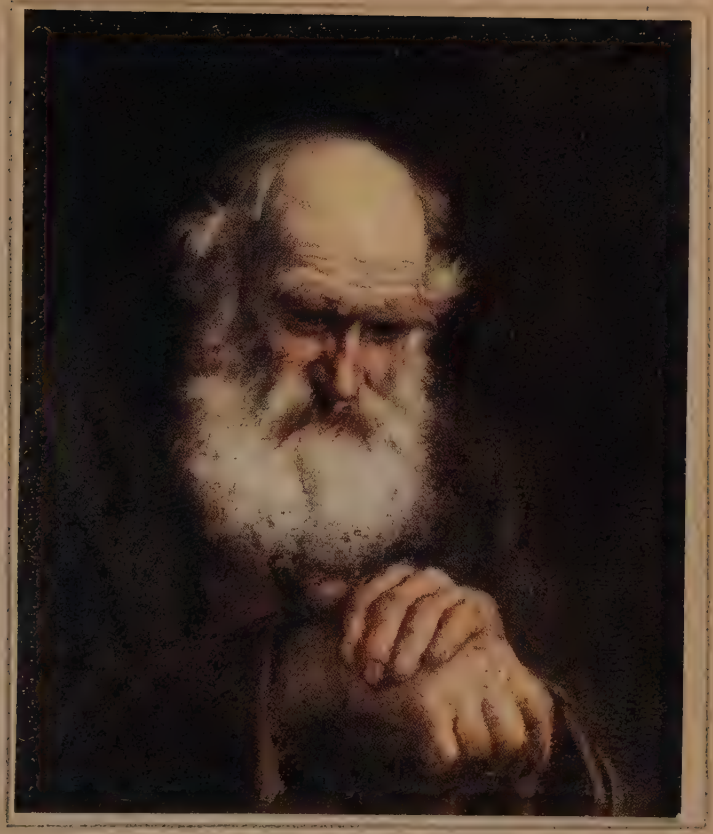
All this the minister knew. All these things he saw in a vision as he sat by the ruined gables of Honeywalls in the sun.

"No—they will never return."

For where the pleasant policy of Hamilton Hall had been, with its gardens and trees and ancient hedges, was now one unbroken expanse of green pasture-lands, where the nibbling of sheep was the only sound. Honeywalls alone, of all that ancient retainership, remains—a mere rickle of grey walls, thatchless, roofless, forlorn. The curious may come to trace the site of the old Hall, but no trace has been left behind. Gone is the Laird, gone are the cottages, ruined stands the farm at East Parks, ruined the steading at East Mains. No coaches ply merrily with the sound of winding horns on the wide vacant road, and a silence, like the stillness of death, reigns at Honeywalls this tranquil October day.

Far away in many a great city men and women were jostling one another to get a living. Their fore-



IN THE HINDU CLASS

bears had tilled these very fields, and they themselves, now old and grey, had been born in these little homesteads. But they heard the call of the world. They rose up and took the bend of the road that is aye supposed to lead to fortune. They left the old simplicities of Honeywalls. Some of them found what they went out to seek, and some lost all that they had. But to-day some of their grandchildren are dreeing out a huddled existence in narrow streets where the clean winds never blow, and the blessed sunlight of God struggles down through the befogged airs, ashamed, as it enters the window of many a grimy room where the children of the poor are crying for bread.

But the quiet October sun went down in a mist of gold behind Honeywalls and the sheepfolds and the little hamlet across the fields.

CHAPTER FIVE

AILIE GORDON'S CHRISTENING ROBE & A PIECE OF BREAD & CHEESE

CHAPTER FIVE
AILIE GORDON'S CHRISTENING ROBE, AND A PIECE OF BREAD AND CHEESE

IT WAS VERY OLD AND VERY GRAND. Not that it belonged to anybody of consequence. For the owner of it was not rich, neither had she ever been married. But she had been christened in it herself, and that was not yesterday, for old Ailie Gordon must have been seventy-five, although she never admitted it.

I can see her yet making her way slowly up the brae in the sunshine to the village school, where she had taught the bairns their sewing—hemming, and cross-stitch, and feathering—for many years. She was little and bent, with a faded black bonnet on her head, an auld-farrant face below it, with a pair of bright, far-away eyes looking out from the wrinkles, and an ancient shawl of great black-and-red checked tartan thrown over her shoulders. There was more red than black in the tartan, and the colour was so sun-bleached that the shawl was just like Ailie's own self, mellow and faded and full of that quiet beauty which old age alone can bring, either to a body or a shawl.

She was a great favourite with the bairns. The pocket of her black bombazine gown was seldom without a sweetie, and she loved the beasts and birds about the doors as well as the school-bairns whom she taught. For many a day a tame blackbird, whose broken leg she had once mended with two wooden matches for splints, hopped about her kitchen floor. When any of our bairns got burned, it was always Ailie Gordon who made the Carron oil, with lime shells from the kilns steeped in water.

Her cottage was by the burnside where the bridge gives access to the village. The bridge was the village cross, the newspaper shop, and the club-room all in one; and the public well being at one end of it, the women were on the bridge as often as the men. At the little end window of the cottage you could always see Ailie's white face framed in the gloom. That was her viewpoint, and nothing ever missed her. She saw everybody that came into the village by day, and on the dark winter forenights her lamp was early set on the little sill to light the traveller that passed up or down, in rain or wind or snow.

Ailie Gordon had come of gentlefolks. Her mind was as sharp as one of her own needles. She had gleg eyes and ears that had taken everything in through a long life. We used to think that she could not forget anything even if she tried. It is not for me, however, to tell of all the rare things she kept hidden away in her cupboards and drawers—ivory miniatures of some that were sib to her, soft silken scarfs of delicate colouring, relics which the French prisoners at Lauder had made, old dresses with an antique glory still about them, bits of curious china, and many other old-world odds and ends.

But the best of all was the Christening Robe. Old Ailie herself had been christened in it, and that was not yesterday. Before that, many more had doubtless got their names while wearing it for a couple of hours. But whatever century saw its coming into an ancient west-country seaport town, it is certain that it came first of all from Holland or one of the Low Countries. There, one of Ailie's grand forebears had bought it—

perhaps when travelling to the old Scots College at Leyden, that ancient howff of all Scots scholars; or it may be when he was coming home in a red coat from some of the fights in Flanders. If this last was it, the young soldier must have got wind of a bairn born to him in far-off Scotland, for one of the ivory miniatures shows ably the young gallant in the scarlet dress of the old Scots Guard. Anyways, the precious thing came home for the bairn in the old seaport town, and a century or so after, it lay fragrant with sweet lavender and the memories of many a bonny bairn in old Ailie's chest of drawers.

It was like no other christening robe I ever saw; for it was made of rich white satin, heavily embroidered in every part with threads of gold. Its value in the olden days must have been great—but certainly it is precious now. What delicate rich silky satin, and what beautiful embroideries of gold! Flowers and ornaments, scrolls and leaves, with an initial entwined most mystically in the ivory and gold of the whole! It had no bodice, to be sure; for what delicate infant's waist could thole to be enclosed in such stiff, gorgeous stuff? It was made in one large square-shaped pall, to cover the little one's long white underskirt—a glorious ornamental robe, for only one brief hour's pageantry in kirk or parlour.

Honoured by-the-ordinary was the mother whose bairn was christened in old Ailie's fine satin robe. For it is a custom among Scots mothers to lend out their robes to the mothers of other wee ones who may not have been as fortunate in good gear as themselves. So the christening robe is handed down from one gener-

ation to another, and many a fine frail muslin piece of open-work embroidery has served to carry one generation after another to the baptism. We have different names in Scots for our grandchildren,—an *Oe* or *Oye*; or, better still, a *bairn's bairn*,—and to many an aged, grandmotherly eye the christening robe never looks better than when it is used for carrying a bairn's bairn to the baptismal basin.

Old Ailie had no bairns of her own, but more than once she was proud to carry a wee one within the folds of her own robe of white and gold. What a Sabbath that was in the country kirk when the summer sun shone down not only on the old foreign embroidery, but on Ailie Gordon's own fine white Paisley shawl, with its corner of red and yellow and black harness pattern, falling in a fringed point down the back of her best black silk gown!

It was the blate young father who carried the bread and cheese. For these great ceremonials of bairnhood have always been leavened with a bit of kind-hearted good luck. The first person to meet a bairn being carried to or returning from baptism was always given a piece of bread and cheese. There are worse customs than this kindly old Scots habit of the baptismal bread and cheese. It was a happy day for the young couple, and a blessed day for the little unconscious babe; and as the father and mother set out for the kirk to consecrate their bairn to God, and rendered thanks on returning for this the best of all the gifts of love, they handed the bread and the cheese in the bairn's name to the first person they forgathered with as a sign that they shared their blessing with all the world. Then

the traveller not only ate his hallowed piece, but turned and walked with them a little way to show them that the heart of all the world went with them to wish them and their new-born bairnie joy.

Here is true Scots luck indeed! To have the good wish of every fellow-traveller on the brae that leads at last to the kirk on the hill, and the good blessing of God Himself who is the Father of every bairn that has ever come into an earthly parish.

Whiles the bairn was carried to kirk, and whiles the christening was in the kitchen or parlour at home. For Scots country miles are long, and mothers are not always able to travel them. Many a wee one has been taken long roads in a farm cart to the christening on a fair Sabbath morn, lying, like the Babe of Bethlehem, cradled in straw. The mother balooed it to sleep in her arms when the road was rough and stony on the moors, and the goodman walked at the horse's head in his best blacks, with the bread and cheese kept handy in a napkin for the first he met. And there, in God's house, standing up before a whole parishful of well-kenned faces, many a young herd and his wife have given a bairn to God that has honoured them greatly in after years, either in college or in kirk.

The old folks liked when the baby cried at the christening. They said the crying bairn had good luck. This, in olden times, meant that when the Man of God christened the babe, the cry was the evil spirit being cast out. "I hope the bairn will cry," said a godly old grandmother who could not get to the christening; and she did not know that her quaint saying was the last vestige of this old superstition about evil spirits.

The poor innocent bairns! In their clean white souls, new come from God, there is not enough of the breath of evil to dim the most sensitive mirror in the world.

It was also unlucky to dry the water on the face of a newly baptized babe,—for every drop was holy now,—and even the handkerchief that was wetted with the sacred drops was kept as a charm. So were the pins that were placed in any part of the bairn's robe. And all these things point us back to a time when our forebears were the victims of much religious superstition.

. . . . . .

Old Ailie is long since dead. She lies well happit, beaking fornent the sun in the old kirkyard beneath the trees. But the christening robe in white and gold still goes its hallowed round, and many a bairn's bairn, whose little fingers Ailie Gordon first guided among the criss-cross stitches of a sampler canvas, will proudly carry the old Dutch robe to kirk again.

CHAPTER SIX

HEATHER JOCK, THE GABERLUNZIE MAN

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"Heather Jock's noo awa',
Heather Jock's noo awa';
The muircock noo may crousely craw
Since Heather Jock's noo awa'."

HIS NAME WAS WILLIAM BRODIE, BUT over all the westland he was known as Heather Jock. For "Heather Jock" was his favourite song, and there are few towns and villages in the west where it was not known. To suit the action to the song, Jock wore a kenspeckle bonnet all over with feathers and brooches and bonny blooms of heather. The bonnet had been at Waterloo on the head of a gallant Scots Grey, when the brave fellows charged at the gallop against the troops of Bonaparte. And when the trooper came home he tossed his busby to Heather Jock for an old song. Jock decked it out with heather, which he gathered on the Gleniffer Braes. He added tinsel brooches, which for many a day he carried in his wallet for the country lasses to buy; and with the brass strap beneath his chin, and the geegaws shaking and shining among the heathery headgear above, he would toss his head at the women and bairns right gallantly when he was singing his songs.

But Heather Jock had his wand of office too, as large and gorgeous as any bishop's crozier. A long strong stick it was, with a heart-shaped disc fastened on the top, and seven or eight small bells below which he jangled merrily when he sang. On one side of the disc was painted a gamecock crowing, and this was doubtless the symbol of his own song:—

"The muircock noo may crousely craw
Since Heather Jock's noo awa'."

In his bien days Jock wore a long blue coat with flying tails and brass buttons—so with the heather bonnet, the long bell-bedecked stick, and the blue-tailed coat, there was none so gay as he at country fairs or feeing markets.

But Jock himself was far more namely than his dress. A douce, temperate, decent body, well-built and soople, with a face that was a cross betwixt a Roman Emperor and a Red Indian chief's, his clear blue eye could search a crowd like a lantern on a dark night.

Like many another wise-like man, Heather Jock was a Paisley body, born at Seestu in the year 1802. He tried the weaving shop and the calico printing as a laddie, but the gangrel blood was in his veins, so he took to the road with a pack on his back, and joined the ranks of the gaberlunzie men. Like other folk, he fell in love with his own "Bonnie Annie Laurie," and at Brig o' Weir set up his house. His homecoming was aye to the Brig o' Weir until he himself, without any of his oft-repeated play-acting of the part, "lay doun to dee"; and so those of us who were born in the next parish, among the habbies of Kilbarchan, have often seen and heard tell of Heather Jock in the days of long ago.

But the pack failed, because Jock, in his simplicity, was oftener sold than his wee bit wares. He took to the life of a stravaiging singer then, and went the round of all the west-country fairs and markets. He was never a robustious singer, but what he lacked in voice he made up in dress and play-acting, and could suit the action to the word better than most.

I can hear his high-set, weak, quavering voice yet, as the old gaberlunzie, with a group of open-mouthed, wondering bairns round him, would sing the last line of "Annie Laurie," and then lie quietly down with his eyes shut on the dusty road between Johnstone and Kilbarchan, not far from Storey's sweetie shop. Ah, Heather Jock, there were many of us standing round you on the road that thought you were away with it altogether, and we were well pleased when at last you opened your eyes and got on to your feet again! For bairns are believing creatures.

But Heather Jock was at his best when he sang "What do you think o' my lang tail blue?" Then, indeed, the bairns were merry. For, throwing all his humour into the song, Jock would catch up the tail of his own blue coat and make a sign for the nearest bairn to follow suit, singing all the while, "What do you think of my lang tail blue?" Then the children would catch up each other's coats, beginning with the coat of the one who was holding on to Jock's own royal blue tails, till round and round in a circle on the road went a train of merry bairns, with Jock in front, jingling his bells and shaking his glittering heather bonnet, and all together singing the chorus, with a ripple of laughter and glee: "What do you think of my lang tail blue?"

Oh, simple, happy Heather Jock, many a greyhead to-day can mind those happy days of breeks and pinafores when you garred their bairn-eyes greet with your pathos and twinkle again with your fun.

It was perhaps the drollest thing about Heather Jock that, being the simplest and most honest of men

himself, he should be nicknamed after a song that records the misdeeds of a thieving rascal.

This is the song of "Heather Jock," which the old gaberlunzie made his own:—

"Heather Jock was stark and grim,
Faucht wi' a' would fecht wi' him;
Swank and supple, sharp and thin,
Fine for gaun against the win'.
Tawnie face and tousie hair,
In his cleading unco bare,
Cursed and swore whene'er he spoke,
Nane could equal Heather Jock.

Jock kent ilka bore and bole,
Could creep through a wee bit hole,
Quietly pilfer eggs and cheese,
Dunts o' bacon, skeps o' bees;
Sip the kirn and steal the butter,
Nail the hens without a flutter;
Na! the watchfu' wily cock
Durstna craw for Heather Jock.

Eppie Blaikie lost her goun
She cost sae dear at borough toun:
Sandy Tamson's Sunday wig
Left the hoose to run the rig;
Jenny Baxter's blankets a'
Took a thocht to slip awa';
And a' the weans' bit printed frocks—
Wha was thief but Heather Jock?

Jock was nae religious youth,
For at the priest he thrawed his mooth;
He wadna say a grace nor pray,
He played his pipes on Sabbath day;
Robbed the kirk o' bann and book.
Everything would lift—he took;
He didna lea' the weather-cock,
Sic a thief was Heather Jock.

Nane wi' Jock could draw a tricker,
'Mang the moorfowl he was sicker;
He watched the wild ducks at the springs
And hang'd the hares on hempen strings,
Blass'd the burns and speer'd the fish,
Jock had mony a dainty dish—
The best o' moorfowl and black cock
Aye graced the board o' Heather Jock.

Nane wi' Jock had ony say
At the nieve or cudgel play.
Jock for bolt nor bar e'er staid,
Till ance the jail his courage laid;
Then the judge, without delay,
Sent him aff to Botany Bay,
And bade him mind the laws he broke,
And never mair play Heather Jock.

Heather Jock's noo awa',
Heather Jock's noo awa',
The muircock noo may crousely craw
Since Heather Jock's noo awa'."

But Heather Jock came at last to the end of his own song, and when he was too frail and weak to perform his daft-like tricks or sing his play-acting ballads, he took to the pack again, and pottered round the countryside selling needles and thread, lace and ribbons and stay bones. And last of all he laid down his pack, and in his own bairn's house at Brig o' Weir, in the year of grace 1885, Heather Jock passed along the dark road which kings and cadgers must travel to find the light on the other side, singing "The Land o' the Leal."

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SHADOW AMONG THE HILLS

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"Lo ! for there, among the flowers and grasses,
Only the mightier movement sounds and passes,
Only winds and rivers,
Life and death."

TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BORN AND bred in towns, the life-and-death anxieties of those who dwell in remote places can never be understood. When a shepherd's house is hidden away in some lonely glen-head, far from a driving road, cut off from kirk and doctor by mile upon mile of heather, and with the nearest neighbour over a hill—then sickness always brings with it a great black fear.

The herd's cottage at Friar's Nose stands in one of the bonniest spots of the lonely Lammermoors. Many a time have I passed a leelang summer day luring the trout in the stream, with no sound to break the thrum of silence but the wail of the whaups and the bleating of lambs. In the shepherd's kitchen, good cheer and a warm welcome have never failed, though even in my day one herd has come and another has gone, over and over again.

But there was a time, long ago, when the Angel reaped three harvests in this sweet far spot within the space of one fell week; and even yet, when I stoop to drink at the clear running cottage spring, I mind me how its tainted waters once brought death to three of the shepherd's little bairns.

. . . . . .

The minister was tired. He had just been for a long tramp down in the east country, and was getting into his slippers, when the front-door bell rang. He sat

perfectly still and listened, till the housekeeper came into the room with a note. He read it in the firelight of the winter afternoon, and then slowly rose to his feet. It was like many another country message, written hurriedly on a soiled, crumpled bit of paper, to say that the bairns were ill at Friar's Nose, and would the minister tell the doctor to come over at once.

"Who brought this?"

"A young herd, sir."

"Is he still at the door?"

"No—he was on his way to Haddington, and just left the paper as he gaed by."

For the doctor lived three miles beyond Fairshiels, and for the Haddington herd to deliver it himself would have put six miles extra on to a long day's tramp. So the surest way was to leave the message at the manse door—and the minister would do the rest. Such are the mischancy and slender means of communication among the hills, when the balance is swithering betwixt life and death. But as soon as quick feet could go and willing hands could yoke a horse, the minister and the doctor were seated in a dogcart, and driving quickly up the great London road for the hills.

John Scott, the doctor of the district in those days, was a plain, downright man. There was nothing very romantic about him—except that he had married for love, and now had a large family of happy boys and girls at home. But what I am going to set down about this night's work will explain better than anything else why the whole countryside loved him.

They drove to the top of Soutra Hill, and at the third pair of snow posts the doctor drew rein. Here

they got down and the groom took the trap home. John Scott lit a lantern, gave it without a word to the minister, and took up his shabby little black bag.

It was a clear, cold, moonlight night. The turnpike road swept over the bleak hill, with a double row of ominous-looking poles eight feet high lining its borders at regular intervals to guide the belated traveller in the time of the winter snows. The great frosted moors stretched for miles on every side—trackless, desolate, and without a single rock or crag to guide those who did not know them. But the doctor knew them; and the minister, who was a much younger man, was beginning to know them too.

The shepherd's house at Friar's Nose is ten miles round by road, and even then the track up the glen becomes invisible a mile or two before reaching the cottage. But by cutting across three miles of heather and bent, the traveller from Fairshiels can drop into the glen-head from the north—and this is how the doctor usually went.

It was a long, hard walk as the two men went plunging through the heather and great tufty bent, with the lantern swinging between them like some moorland will-o'-the-wisp.

"That slight rise on the left is Ninecairn Edge," said the doctor, "the one on the right is Kelphope Hill, and our way lies right between them. Another mile and you'll be there."

Yet to the minister's eye the two hills seemed nothing more nor less than imperceptible undulations on an almost level wilderness of moor.

So they held straight on. Then they began to de-

scend. At last, low down in the shadows of a deep glen-head, they saw a light.

"There it is!" exclaimed the minister.

"Yes," said the doctor, "and I wish I knew what was wrong with the bairns. The town fellows have only to step along the street and bring back from the dispensary or the surgery whatever they need. But here! It would take a whole day to fetch a bit of sticking-plaster. And bairns are quick—terrible quick—when they have trouble."

A dog barked down at the house when they were still a long way off.

"Do you hear that?" said the doctor. "It is almost impossible to pay a surprise visit to one of these Lammermoor shepherds. Their dogs can scent a stranger on the hill a long way off."

At the sound of the barking, a door opened and someone came out. In a few minutes a very tall man, with a perfectly stolid face, met them on the hill.

"Well, Anderson, here we are. How are the children?"

"Thank ye, sir."

And the big man said no more until he had solemnly shaken hands.

"We've had a sair time o't, sir. The mistress is near oot o' her mind. But sma' wunner! Mysie, the auldest lassie, dee'd about denner-time. We've sent Mary and Kate doon to Kelphope to be oot o' the road. But wee Willie has the trouble noo."

"What trouble, Anderson?" said the doctor, in a quick, sharp voice.

"We dinna richtly ken what the trouble is. The

bairns never had a tout before. But they hae a' had terrible sair throats."

"Ah!" said the doctor under his breath. He needed to ask no more.

The dog whined when the door was opened, and the slow-tongued, heavy-looking shepherd, who was not a cruel man, kicked it into silence with his great heavy boot.

On a heap of blankets placed on two chairs, in the middle of the floor, a child lay with the lamp-light streaming over his white, pinched face. One woman —the mother—was on her knees bending over him; another—the neighbour from Kelphope—stood by her side.

The doctor, without a word, went to work at once. A vital stillness pervaded the kitchen while he pursued his investigations with the utmost calmness. He seemed to have forgotten everything else but the child and himself.

Suddenly he looked up.

"Where is the other one?"

"Next door," said the woman from Kelphope.

The mother rose then, with a wild, hungry look of ownership in her eyes, and spoke for the first time.

"Is it Mysie ye want to see, doctor? She's soond asleep in the room bed, but they'll no' let me ben. So dinna mak' a noise, or ye micht wauken her. She was aye a licht sleeper."

And the woman began to weep quietly, as she fell on her knees again and—kissed the child!

"Ah! Don't do that, please. You must give Willie

every chance, you understand, and he must be kept very quiet."

The minister nodded and went over to the chairs, as John Scott and the shepherd passed out.

In a very short time he came back. His face was perfectly passive. Only—his eyes seemed to be seeing everything at once.

"Did ye see Mysie, doctor?" said the mother, looking up.

"Yes."

"What wey will they no' let me ben to her? She's been sleepin' a lang time noo."

"Because Mysie doesn't need you when she's asleep. It's Willie here that needs you, and you must be brave for his sake."

"What's wrang wi' the wee man, doctor? Can ye no' bring him roun'?"

"I think I can—at least, I am going to try. But you must do all that I tell you."

The mother began to weep again at the mere suggestion that there was any doubt. So her husband came over to her, and took her into his great strengthy arms that had many a time carried the lambs in the spring of the year.

Then the doctor signed to the minister, and they passed out together into the star-lit night. There was only one sound in the solemn, lonely world—the hush-een of the burn as it ran between the great rounded hills.

"It is very acute diphtheria."

"I thought so."

"The woman's mind is almost unhinged owing to

her present condition. And the least mistake just now may prove fatal."

"I understand."

"There's only one chance of saving the child's life —tracheotomy. And the thing must be done at once."

There was silence between them for a moment. Each instinctively looked at the stars, for both knew what the operation involved.

"Then let me do it, doctor. I have less to risk than you, and no one to think of."

"Tut, tut, man—that is out of the question. Thank you all the same. I won't forget that you offered. But it is my business and—privilege. All I brought you out for was to ask you to keep the two women out here until I send for them. The air will do the poor mother good, and there is no time to lose."

So they returned to the cottage, and soon the shepherd and the doctor were left alone in the kitchen with the child.

"Now, Anderson—your boy's life may depend on your keeping cool, and doing exactly what I tell you."

The man of the hills nodded and took up his position.

Then John Scott forgot everything but his work. He was in the heart of the Lammermoors, twenty miles from the nearest operating theatre, with nothing but his own clear brains, his skilly hands, and what lay in his little black bag to help him. Yet it never once occurred to him that he was working under a handicap. Those were the days long before the blessed antitoxic serum had robbed diphtheria of its terror. So his hands moved with an unhasting swiftness in the

little lamp-lit kitchen. He did it well—he could not have done it better. Then—without hesitating—he put his lips to the child's throat!

. . . . . .

There is a routh of ways in which a man can face death. One man dies at the head of his army, and the world hails him as a hero. But there are men and women facing death daily in obscure places, in commonplace circumstances, and with their eyes wide open. Yet the world goes on, and the world never knows.

So John Scott was a non-such for a doctor to every man, woman, and bairn in five parishes. In this outlandish place, within the humble cottage of a shepherd, and bielded by the everlasting hills, he risked his life for the sake of a little child. It was his duty. And he did it. That was all.

When he was quite finished, he opened the door, summoned the others, and walked straight down to the burn alone.

But—it was many a day before the Fairshiels folk saw the doctor again. For the price of the sacrifice to him was a long, weary winter fight. But he was a dour man and a strong man, and by the grace of God he won through it at last. So, when the early summer sun shone out, the old folks saw him one day walking very slowly about his garden, with a pale, thin face. And soon the caller air and the heather did the rest.

. . . . . .

But what way ends this tale of Friar's Nose?

The grass was already growing green on a wee howe in the lown kirkyard, and a mother, with a young

face and snow-white hair above it, sat at the cottage door nursing a little bairn with this strange baloo on her lips—

"I dinna ken what's come ower me!
There's a how whaur ance was a hert!
I never luik oot afore me,
An' a cry winna gar me stert;
There's naething nae mair to come ower me,
Blaw the win' frae ony airt!

For i' yon kirkyard there's a hillock,
A hert whaur ance was a how;
An' o' joy there's no' left a mealock—
Deid aiss whaur ance was a low!
For i' yon kirkyard i' the hillock
Lies a seed 'at winna grow.

It's my hert 'at hauds up the wee hillie—
That's hoo there's a how i' my breist;
It's awa' doon there wi' my Willie—
Gaed wi' him whan he was releast;
It's doon i' the green-grown hillie,
But I'se be efter it neist!

Come awa', nicht an' mornin',
Come ooks, years, a' Time's clan;
Ye're welcome: I'm no' a bit scornin'!
Tak' me til him as fest as ye can.
Come awa', nicht an' mornin',
Ye are wings o' a michty span.

For I ken he's luikin' an' waitin',
Luikin' aye doon as I clim';
An' I'll no' hae him see me sit greetin'
I'stead o' gaein' to him!
I'll step oot like ane sure o' a meetin',
I'll travel an' rin to him."

CHAPTER EIGHT

PROVIDENCE & THE PRESSGANG

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IT IS ONLY A WEE RED-TILED TWO STORied house with a wooden outside stair, but to this day it is called Providence. It stands on the west side of a steep, narrow lane which climbs from the ancient seafaring town with its auld-farrant streets and gable-ends to the high grounds above. There, when once you have peched up the brae, the eye sweeps in a bonny Scots world of hill and laighland and sea, from Stobinian to St. Margaret's Hope, with the green-shored lands of Fife and the quiet Ochils across the fairway of the Forth.

Backed by an old garden, from which there are many ways of approach to and from the town, with its vennels, its back doors, and its secret passages, this same wee bit House of Providence has sheltered many a buirdly man when the king's sailors were clearing the harbour with the pressgang. Let a man once win up the brae to Providence, and he was safe. For there were wise folks dwelling there, with a hidey-hole for every honest man, and from the little deep-set windows that winked in the sunrise along the eastern braes or over the old garden to the sunset in the west the sentry could command every approach from the town below or from the cow-parks above.

Those were the days when the pressgang struck terror in many a quiet seaport town or village. For the king's navy had to be manned, and the pressgang was the only way of getting sailor men. The sight of a ship of war in a fairway or a harbour was enough to send the waesome news round the whole countryside, for every sailor lad of eighteen and every sailor man

under five-and-fifty was liable to be pressed into the service.

A party of picked men fully armed would land at the jetty, or along the quiet shores, and under the command of a king's officer would scour the district, giving neither mercy nor quarter. They could enter any house where a likely sailor man lived, and carry him aboard without saying By your leave. But sailor men are ill to meddle with, and there was many a fierce fight with fisticuffs and weapons. Lives were often lost when it came to the cutlass or pistol for defence.

The pressgang could even board a privateer or merchant ship, for the merchant sailors made the handiest navy men. So a smart privateer was aye fearful of the friendship of a man o' war. In harbour or at sea the navy men had law on their side to seize or to press, and a dooms black outlook had the lover or the family man who fell into the rough hands of the navy gang. It might then be good-bye to the old fireside for years, for half a lifetime, or for ever. And for all the long slumber of these pressgang laws, which from the year of grace 1835 have fallen into a limbo of disuse, still the laws remain unrepealed in our land of freedom and mercy.

. . . . . .

Yonder, out in the roads, a king's ship had just appeared, and was now riding at anchor, all taut and trim with rattlings and yards and the long pennants of Geordie flying from the peaks of the rakish-looking masts. Down in the harbour lay little barques and schooners from France, the Baltic, and the Low Countries, the town whaler new come home from Arctic

seas, and a little Dutch ketch lying alongside with her green-painted leeboard cocked up on the starboard like the flapper of a great fish. In the vennels and streets and all about the quayside, crowds of seafaring men were continually coming and going. A man found it ill to hide in the open streets, for they were so narrow that whiles a cart could scarce win by the great outside stairs that debouched on the causey, and the story goes that a housewife who had taigled overlong in the morning over the washing of her front door step in the main street had her feet cut off by a passing waggon when she was down on her knees with the washing-clout.

The crowds of seafaring men that kept rubbing shoulders in these mean vennels were from all parts—some speaking in the broad, homely Scots tongue; some in the jabber of foreign lands; and a few with the soft-sliding lilt of the English Channel counties.

It was these last that got many a sklenting glance of suspicion thrown at them by the big burly men of the seaport who were hame-biders and from the women who were their wives and sweethearts. For under many a douce, plain coat was hidden the blue uniform of the king's navy men. These were the officers of the pressgang. They wandered aimlessly up and down, or stood about the partings of the streets between the Castle of Clouts and Mrs. Rattray's shop—that brave emporium where, cheek-by-jowl with boots and shoes, a stranded sailor man could buy salts and senna and cream o' tartar, assafetida and garlic pills. Once a big fellow was marked down by an officer of the pressgang, he had little chance of seeing either

wife or sweetheart for many a year to come if he went out stravaiging after dark. That was why the streets were quiet and deserted after sunset when a king's ship appeared in the Firth.

So a light burned every night in the little House of Providence on the steep brae high above the town. An eye was watching at the window there every day. None could approach the red-tiled, innocent-looking refuge without being challenged or giving the secret password. Many a big lad has raced up that brae for life and freedom when the pressgang were busy at their ruthless work.

But there was one man more than any other who was pestered by their dangerous attentions—Jake Beaton the Waterman. He lived in the vennel with his old mother, and was reputed to be the strongest man in the town. He could lift his ferry boat on his back with his own hands and carry it home. His arms were by-ordinary long, for his finger-tips touched his knees, and his legs were like barrel stoups. Strong, thick-set, a skilful waterman, and full of a devil-may-care courage, Jake Beaton was the one man in the old port that the pressgang were determined to have for their own. And although in the end he served under Nelson and fought at Trafalgar, yet it was long before the men in blue could lay hands on him.

One day he breenged in at the door of the house in the vennel.

"My grief, Jake," exclaimed his old mother, "what's like the matter noo?"

"Gie me my bulldogs."

It was always the same, and she knew that the press-

gang were after him whenever he went over to the hole in the kitchen wall and took out a brace of heavy pistols. These were his bulldogs.

"Oh, Jake, ye'll never halt till one o' the blue-coats is dead."

"Never fear, mother—I'm no' catched yet."

And off he would go at the darkening with his bulldogs concealed in his belt.

But he never went near the town. He took his way up past Providence, and left a message there to warn those inside that there was danger abroad. Then, working his way stealthily along the braeheads westward, he soon entered the duke's policy of Kinneil, where, in a sheltered place of the Gilburn Wood, he had slung a hammock between two trees. This was Jake Beaton's lodging. For he never slept at home when the pressgang were about. So to this secret place in the Gilburn Wood he came when night fell.

But the pressgang found out his hiding-place, and early one morning, when Jake was sleeping in his hammock, sailor fashion, with his one eye open, he heard a crackling of twigs in the wood. Springing to the ground, he pulled out his bulldog.

"John Beaton, you are a prisoner in the king's name!" said a voice out of the gloom.

And Jake cocked his pistol.

"Surrender, or you are a dead man."

"Nae fear o' that," replied Jake from behind a tree.

"How so?" said the officer.

"Because the pressgang wants Jake Beaton alive, and has nae use for Jake Beaton deid."

And with that, he bounded off through the wood with the whole band of the pressgang after him.

Down through the Gilburn Wood he ran, with leaps and bounds, swifter than any could follow him; then across the field, and on to the foreshore. When he got to the level shores of the carse land he was not so swift as some of the lanky Englishers, and after a mile or two some of the pressgang began to gain upon him. Jake, realising his danger, plunged into the sea, and made for the Fife shore, which was a couple of miles away. He swam right across, and so escaped from his enemies. And the last thing that the officer heard, as he stood on the shore with his men in the dawnlight, glowering after the skilly swimmer, was a voice far out in the waves crying, "I'm no' catched yet!"

Jake's business as a waterman was to row any stranger across the Firth from the harbour to the Fife shore. The regular charge was half a sovereign. And on account of his great strength and skill, Beaton was much sought after by travellers who wished a safe ferry across the Forth.

One afternoon he was hanging about the quayhead with his mates when a stranger in a long grey cloak came up to him.

"Are you a waterman?"

"That I am," replied Jake.

"Then, could you row me over to the other side and set me down on Crombie Point yonder?"

"Yes, sir."

"And the fare?"

"Half a sovereign."

"Right. Then meet me at the steps with your boat in half an hour."

"I'll be there," said Jake. And the man in the long grey cloak walked away into the town.

Jake went home to the house in the vennel.

"Where away now, Jake?" inquired his mother.

"To the Fife shore with a stranger. But gie me the bulldogs."

"Eh, lad—are they after ye again? Ye'll never halt till ye're ta'en."

"Ay—but I'm no' catched yet."

And with that he was off.

Soon he was rowing the stranger across the Forth.

"To Crombie Point—remember."

"Yes, sir—I ken the place fine. But how will the tide suit?"

And Jake rested on his oars and looked round. On the near shores he saw a little group of sailor men hanging about on Crombie Point.

"I fear the tide'll no' suit for a landing there, sir. We maun gang doon the shore to Charleston."

The grey cloak moved a bit, and Jake caught a glimpse of blue and gold on the arm beneath that was working at the belt.

"To Crombie Point, or nowhere," cried the stranger, whipping out his pistol and covering Jake with it. He was a pressgang officer in disguise.

"Then it's nowhere," replied Jake, whipping out *two* pistols and covering the officer with both.

"I'm no' catched yet. Two dogs are better nor one. Lay doon that weapon, or my bulldogs will bite ye, my bonny man. These braw frien's o' yours on Crom-

bie Point can bide a wee. But, never fear, I'll land ye a' richt, but on a place o' my ain choosin'."

And covering the now defenceless officer with both pistols, Jake skilfully drifted his boat down firth on the ebb-tide, and grounded her on a spit of muddy land near Blackness Castle, a few miles from the harbour that they had left an hour or so before.

"Now, my man—get out and walk ashore. The mud here is nae mair nor a foot deep, and if ye tak' your time and dinna leave your shoon ahint ye, ye'll dae the journey in ten minutes. Guid-day to ye, sir, and dinna forget when ye are in the mud that my twa bulldogs can bite."

So the officer had to walk ashore in the sludge, and Jake quietly rowed his boat back to the harbour.

That night, when he opened the kitchen door in the vennel, his old mother, with a white mutch on her head, was masking tea over the fire.

"Eh, my laddie, ye've won back again?"

"Ay—for I'm no' catched yet."

CHAPTER NINE

BRIDAL IN THE LAMMERMOORS

CHAPTER NINE
BRIDAL IN THE LAMMERMOORS

"They were blest beyond compare
When they held their trysting there,
Amang thae greenest hills shone on by the sun."

SO LONG AS THERE ARE SUMMER GLOAMings, and lads and lasses to forgather at the milkings, or wander by the quiet burnsides, the old, old story will be told, and never twice told in the same way. The custom of love in Fairshiels, as elsewhere, never grows old-fashioned.

But there are times and seasons with us more than with most folk, and to all Fairshiels brides and bridegrooms it is ever well to say, "Pray that your flight be not in winter." The mere telling of love can be somehow contrived at any season, but the consummation of love is whiles ill to come at when the winter snows are lying deep among the hills, and the shepherd's doors are smoored to the very lintels with soft, silent drifts.

Still and on, I have seen the Red, Red Rose, the Rose of All the World, blooming most mystic and very fragrant at the back of a wilderness, when the earth was lying still and dead under its dazzling shroud.

. . . . . .

It happened that the minister's first wedding was fixed for a winter forenight in the month of December at the grieve's cottage away up at the Laird's place of Gilston, three miles from anywhere, among the hills. That was the year of the great storm, and when the day came, the snow had obliterated the very hedges, and neither man nor beast could follow the road that leads from the northern slopes of the Lammermoors

over Soutra into Galawater. To townsfolk it is hard to believe that dykes and ditches, turnpikes and cross-roads can be altogether hidden beneath an undulating counterpane of snow; and to the minister, looking out of his study window, it seemed a hopeless thing that wedding guests should win up the seven miles from the station at Heriot on the one side, or that he himself should cross the hills three miles on foot from the other. He had been nervously going over the ceremony, with the service book in his hand. He had even paid a sly visit to the Dominie, who was both elder and parish registrar, and had got a look at the long blue paper about which he was so anxious. And now, while he was looking out at the silent morning world, a great plough horse, with a man on its back, came plodding through the snow to the manse gate.

The man got off to deliver a note. It was from the Laird: "*I will ride down with a led horse for you at four o'clock. Be prepared to ride back with me, and put on your old clothes.*"

So the problem was solved, and the man on the plough horse plunged back again across the hill, with a sackful of bread and provisions swung across his saddle, and the answer in his pocket.

But it was all so different from what he had expected it to be—this first wedding ceremony. No wedding bells, no fine company, no need even for his gown or his best black coat. A long, perilous ride in the dusk of a wintry night, with the smell of a fresh already in the air, and a new adventure in duty weighing heavily on his untried soul—that was all. Truly, the shepherd of Christ's sheep in the parish of Fairshiels must needs

be a man of resourceful parts, as well as a man of strong and simple faith. It put an edge on his anxiety to know that the pawkie Laird was not nearly so concerned about the wedding of his grieve's daughter as about his new minister's way with a horse. Here, he had found a very practical way of putting to the test all those flattering speeches that had been made by the Doctor of Divinity and the town elders on the ordination night, which was now some months gone by. To make things worse, the fresh had evidently set in, and a damp mist was beginning to obscure the hills, when, round the corner of the kirk the Laird appeared on a great, big-boned hunter, sixteen and a half hands high, leading a little grey mare by the bridle.

"Are you ready?" he shouted cheerily, without dismounting.

"Quite," replied the minister, as he walked through the snow to the side of the mare.

Nothing more was said. Both Laird and minister were Scots. But the younger man knew, without looking, that every movement and action of his was being quietly criticised from the moment he took hold of the mare's head. The old riding-crop which he tucked under his arm, the way he measured the stirrup-straps and shortened them by one hole, his manner of gathering the reins and of placing his hands on the saddle with his left foot in the stirrup, and the clean spring which landed him in position on the mare's back as she began to dance a waltz in the snow—every detail was calmly marked by the ruddy-faced Laird, who sat silent and motionless on the big hunter and surveyed the whole performance with a smile.

"You go first," said the man of many acres.

"All right," replied the minister, with a twinkle in his eye at this further test, as he gently walked the mare through the village. A score of experts peered anxiously through the cottage windows, where the early lamps were already set, as both horses walked slowly to the road-end. There, when they turned their faces up the wide road for the hills, a gentle touch with the crop sent the fiery little mare off at a swinging canter. The rider looked neither to the right hand nor to the left, but sat easily as they went flying past Juniper Lea. The minister was not riding for his life but he was riding for his reputation, and before he got to the foot of Soutra Hill he had won it. The Laird, not knowing his new minister's love for a horse, was out that wild winter afternoon for a frolic. But he had met his match, and was proud to be disappointed.

So the high-boned hunter came pounding up behind.

"Well done, minister. Let me go first now."

There were no words wasted, but it was no empty compliment either. For in the Lammermoors, where men are born and bred in silence, these two little words, "Well done," are equal to a whole volume of testimonials written on foolscap and bound in half-calf and gold.

For another mile the horses climbed right on to the misty top of Soutra Hill, twelve hundred feet up, where the snow had been wind-swept and there was only an occasional drift. Then, down again, plunging and ploughing through the wet snow, until, with a final canter, they entered the stableyard of Gilston with a merry clatter of hoofs and a jingling of bits.

. . . . . .

Within the cottage kitchen, which had so often been hallowed by the joys and sorrows of love, the wedding guests are doucely set about in comely pairs. Most of them had come up the heavy Heriot road in carts that were drawn through the deep drifts by horses yoked in tandem. The lamp was lit. The fire burned in the silence. The booted Laird was there in his riding things. The little company of simple folk is solemnised with prayer. So, with the hush of the winter world lying all about them, and the warm friendships of many a leal heart beating by their sides, the country man and the country maid join hands and are made one by the holiest vow that a man or a woman can ever make in life.

But on leaving the cottage, a solemn-faced giant of the sheepfolds came up to the minister and craved a word.

"There's juist ae objection I hae to your wey o' mairryin' folk, sir."

"And what is that?" asked the minister, wondering if he had made any mistake in his first ceremony.

"Ye didna bind the wumman sair eneuch doon—for ye left oot that bonny wee word 'obey'!"

"Ah!" laughed the minister, "is that all? Where there is true love, John, it carries with it a mutual understanding that has no need for obedience."

But the shepherd, who had a right magerful wife at home, went away in the darkness shaking his head.

The night was now pitchy black, and the cold wet mists were driving, like rain, across the hills.

"How can we possibly see to ride across the hill in

the dark and mist, with so much drifted snow on the ground?" asked the minister, with a touch of anxiety in his voice.

"*We* can't see, but the *horses* can. Leave them to themselves, and no fear but they will find the way."

So the big hunter, followed by the little grey mare, set off again for the hill. To the minister it was a new sensation to go plunging up hill and down dale, out of one darkness into another, on the back of a horse. The wet wind whistled about his ears, a misty blackness shrouded his face, and all he could do was to sit firm and lippen to the wise little beast that knew the hill paths so much better than himself. A mystical fragrance seemed to drug the night winds up there on the wild wet hill. The rider lifted his face in rapture and smiled as he galloped through the night. Faith and Love, the Pure White Snow, and the Red, Red Rose—they were both with him here in the wilderness.

When at last he dismounted in a heap of snow and slush at the manse gate, warm and wet and a trifle weary, the Laird leant down to shake hands with him.

"Good-night, minister—you'll do."

That was all. Then he rode away with a splashing of hoofs in front of the old kirk.

. . . . . .

The years go slowly by, and the wedding this time is to take place in the low country, some five miles west of Fairshiels.

It is a windless summer night, and the whole countryside is steeped in the radiant light of the setting sun as the minister rides slowly and contentedly along the dusty roads and turns up at last a sequestered lane that

THE APPLE OF HER EYE

leads to the farmtown of Dodridge. The roses are hanging on the cottage walls, and there is a breath of honeysuckle in the gardens where the eident bees are murmuring late. He dismounts in front of a cottage where a little crowd of friends are grouped about the door. He enters into the joys as he shares the sorrows of the country folk—and this is another night of joy. There is not enough room in the little cottage kitchen for all, so some of the guests overflow into the garden, and whether standing within or without, they listen in reverent silence while once more man and maid are joined in that holy union of hearts which is a living symbol of Christ and His Kirk.

It is an ideal night for festival, and the world of field and hedgerow, that is now lit up with lambent light, is an audience chamber worthy of a king. The sacred service is over, and there is a sound of distant music as all troop out into the flower-perfumed air. The piping lad now stands in the roadway blowing blasts of quick-stepping melody, with his crimson face to the west. That way lies the farmplace, and the barn, where the wedding feast is spread. The bride, dowered with blushes and dressed in radiant white, takes her place behind the gallant piper with her hand upon her new-made husband's arm. Then come the best man and the best maid, and after them the minister with the bride's mother on his arm. Then another couple and another, till all are marshalled bravely on the quiet country road. With a swing and a flourish and a blast of bridal music, the piper steps out, and the gay little procession wends its way along the sunset lane. With smiles from the old folks, and laughter

from the young, and a handful of coppers for the little group of bairns, we arrive betimes at the granary stair, where the piper blows his last breath away.

In the spacious upper chamber, a long table groans with good things, and after remembering God again, the minister, amid a strange constraint of country silence, stands up to carve a roast of prodigious size. As he labours warmly to his task, he gradually leads the tongue-tied company into happy talk with a tactful telling of many ancient tales of a humorous turn, until the heavy silence of the opening hour is dispelled. The plates go merrily round, the laughter grows, the talk flows on, until the flower-bedecked barn becomes a rustic hall of innocent merriment.

And ere he leaves, the man of God, who shows his people how to rejoice as well as how to sorrow, voices the feelings of all by wishing blessing to the happy pair and a tranquil eventide to the old folks.

Outside, a silver crescent moon hangs high in the summer night. The earth in the cool mirk breathes out a thousand new-born fragrances, while the sound of music and dancing steals over the woodlands and fields from the open door of the lamp-lit barn. Through the witchery of this still night the minister rides slowly home, with a prayer in his heart for the young folks, and the words of this old, old song ringing through his soul—

"Oh mornin' life! oh mornin' luve!
Oh lichtsome days and lang,
When hinnied hopes around our hearts
Like simmer blossoms sprang.

. . . . . .

That was a time, a blessed time,
When hearts were fresh and young,

When freely gushed all feelings forth,
  Unsyllabled—unsung.
. . . . . .
The fount that first burst frae this heart
  Still travels on its way,
And channels deeper as it rins
  The luve o' life's young day."

CHAPTER TEN
THE BLIND GANGREL

CHAPTER TEN: THE BLIND GANGREL

IF THE SCOT IS A GRIPPY MAN WITH SILLER, it is because his land of birth is an ill place to gather gear. So when he gets even a pickle wealth, he is uncoloth to part with it. But one way or another, Scotland has aye been rich in one thing—beggars.

It was Andrew Fletcher, the great patriot, who wrote within his own library at Saltoun in the year 1698 these words: "There are at this day two hundred thousand people begging from door to door. And though the number of them be perhaps double to what it was formerly, by reason of this present great distress, yet in all times there have been about one hundred thousand of these vagabonds who have lived without any regard or subjection either to the laws of the land, or even those of God and nature."

If the great statesman at Saltoun was right, then in a country with little over one million people in it, there must have been, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, one beggar for every five people in the land. Little wonder, then, that the country which has bred the best of men and brains on oatmeal and conscience was known at one time as Puir Auld Scotland.

Poverty has always been kindly dealt with in a country which itself has been so poor. Long ago, when hungry vagabonds roamed the country, the Scots law decreed that no man was to be charged with theft for as much meat as he could carry on his back. This was surely to lighten the weight of the heaviest sheep!

So to help the poor, in the time of James VI. a licence was given to a certain number of beggars in every parish. They wore blue gowns, to which were pinned lead badges supplied by the Kirk Session with the

name of the parish stamped upon them. Added to their accoutrements of mendicancy was a stout leathern wallet which gave to these blue gownsmen the name of Gaberlunzies. Each parish was divided into different bands or strips, and a gaberlunzie might take one band each day until he had begged over the whole parish in a fortnight. To be three years resident in a parish was to qualify for the blue gown and lead token of the gaberlunzie.

From that ancient time to this, we have never been without the wandering man. In the towns and cities the law hunts him from one howf to another. But in the quiet country-places and in the highland glens in summer-time, he is still to be seen—no longer, it is true with blue gown and leaden label, but with his little brown tent and willow wands, in which his gangrel wife and brown, barefooted bairns sleep, or trudging on alone with his bundle on his back, the world always before him at the top of each brae, and life one Great To-morrow that holds in it for him, no more or less than for us, the new, the unknown, and the better things that are always to be.

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But the Blind Gangrel was one of the last of these namely picturesque wandering men that in past days used to make the roads of Scotland the happy hunting ground of those who love all that is kenspeckle in human nature.

It is many years since I first saw him with his dogs near the long glen-foot which lies on the wise man's side of Schiehallion. He was then on his way from Loch Tay to Rannoch, and as he never covered more

than five or six miles of good high road in the space of one day, it was easy to win up on him from behind.

What a queer character he was! He had a good six feet of highland stuff in him, with a fine old headpiece set proudly on a pair of broad shoulders, a brick-brown weather-beaten face with an old glengarry bonnet cocked over a shock of curly white hair. The high brow, the eagle nose with the aggressive breeding of a whole score of chieftains in it, a middling chin, with just a hint of slackness about the mouth below the white moustache, and a pair of true-blue, misty, far-ben highland eyes—surely a fine adventure in headcraft this, if only the eyes had not been blind! For the rest—add an ancient kilt of the colour that needs no introduction in Lochaber, home-knitted hosen of red and black marl, monstrous boots, a ragged rain-coat with a hint of the fine gentleman still in its cut, and over coat and all a thick black tarpaulin cape.

Whatever treasures of the humble this last might hide, it still took the baggage and the dogs to complete the blind gangrel's accoutrements. For, slung across the shoulders was a thick leathern strap, from one end of which dangled a square wooden box on the chest, balancing two bolsters or pokes, which hung from the other end down on the small of his back. In each hand he carried a stout stick to guide him as he crept along, grasping at the same time in the left hand the long dog-chain of the dour-looking collie that led him. A second collie ranged freely by his side. A set of bagpipes lay in the wooden box, and the back bolsters contained his changes and wherewithals.

An exchange of courtesies in the passing, and the

travel-talk soon began. From John o' Groats to Crieff, with some word of the Lothians, Linlithgow kirk and palace, and the glens and bens between—he knew them all, for he had been on the road for a whole generation. My own rags were little better than his, for it had been a long, hard-climbing day, yet he jaloused by the voice what I was.

"Parson or dominie?"

"The first. But how did you know?"

"Because you speak like one that explains to the crowd."

"Have you the Gift, then?"

"Ay—so. But I am old and done now, and when the body is failing, the thrum of the spirit is easy broke."

With that we came to the garden gate, from which you can see the deer coming down the hill fornent to feed on the sweeter grasses in the quiet evening sun. I asked him in to rest and eat, and we were soon seated on the grass. For he would not cross the doorstep. So out came the Bit Ladye whose chief business in life is to entertain gangrels; tea and scones followed; and there, with the growling collies guarding the box and bolsters, the blind beggar slipped a wooden coggie from beneath his cape, and held it out for the tea. When he ate the scones, a dog's mouth joined his on either side of the white moustache, and so the three of them nibbled quietly at the same piece. If one of us happened to touch the wooden box or the bolsters, there was a snarl and a snap from the collies.

"Ah! Dinna meddle wi' my bit things, or the dogs will flee at ye!"

So the feast went on, with intermittent talk of hill-

craft and the gift, until the last drop of tea was drained from the coggie.

There is something weird in listening to the talk of a blind old man who has the Sight. Let glib folk from the cities say what they will, there are high mysteries blowing, like the wind, about a hillman's soul, and the Unseen envelops him, like the mist in a corrie.

Then came the spaeing of our fortunes. For he read the hand, feeling it all over with a strong, firm touch, and peering into the lines in the summer evening sunshine with his almost sightless eyes. He truly divined many things that were past, and spoke plainly of some things that are hidden away in a man's own knowledge of himself. Then a routh of other things: Jenny Geddes and her stool, conscience and the schools, human affinities and the sense of God—these were some of the subjects of our evening collogue.

We spoke, too, of the high mountains and the solitary stravaigings of men who, like ourselves, love them with a great love. He talked of winds and thunders and the whispering voices that speak to men out of the swirling mists. He showed great intimacy with the Book, and those holy things which are only revealed to one who is in rapport with the unseen. Then, pointing to the hills that were sleeping in their evening silences all about us, he ended with these words:—

"You can never win close to Him till you climb high up yonder all your lone, where there is no one else to break the thrum."

At last, with much yelping from the dogs, he rose to go, swinging with ease the box and bolsters over his shoulder, and muttering to himself all the while.

The glen folks said he was a lost laird, with a story of his own that could not stand the telling; and sure enough, he would give no hint of name or clan or dwelling-place. But on parting at the bend of the bridge over the river which in the good Gaelic is called the Spatey Stream, he turned to me and said, "When you are far away in yon dark town, call me, if you like. The man who wears the Urim and the Thummim!"

So with that we parted. But we were sib. And we shall meet again—some day!

There's a gangrel bit in the heart of me
That makes me sib to the wandering man,
And many a time has my soul cried out
For the way men lived when the world began—
Wind, and sun, and the splash of rain,
And the bonny brown earth to roam;
With beasts and birds and flowers for friends,
And the bield of a wood for home.

So I say good-bye to the haunts of men
Where the fever of life runs high,
And the noise of the midnight street is heard
'Neath the glare of the lamp-lit sky!
For the road, the hill, and the running stream
Keep calling my heart through the summer night,
Like a yammering whaup that seeks its mate
On the purple moor in the sunset light.

Then I lie at rest, with the silver stars
Piercing the velvety darkness through,
And I hear the sound of the mountain streams
Quieting the soul like a bairn's baloo.
For men were not only fashioned to live
'Mid the clash and clang of a jostling crowd;
God made the silence as well as the sound,
And the simple soul as well as the proud.

So I climb the desolate hills that make
The ramparts of God's great world,

THE BLIND GANGREL

Where the ruins of earth from shattered cliffs
Down from their summits are hurled.
There—in the windless silence, alone,
Forgetful of every load,
I lift my soul to the Infinite,
In perfect rapport with God.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
LADY HUNGRY & THE KAIN HENS

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YOU CAN SEE HER PORTRAIT TO-DAY IN the Earl's castle at Oxenford down by. She is dressed in a Diana Vernon costume, frilled at the neck and wrists, and with one hand she supports her shrewd, long-nosed, Scots face, while with the other she caresses the head of a favourite dog. But it is generations now since the sound of her horse's hoofs clattered along the main road past the village of Fairshiels.

It was on a snell March day of the year 1760 that young John Dalrymple rode quietly up from Oxenford to Hamilton Hall, to see his Cousin Elizabeth, only child and heiress of Thomas Hamilton of Fala. As he walked his horse up the avenue to the old square hall with the pleasant garden and the famous yew hedges, he looked, for all the world, like a gay young blood who found the time hanging heavily on his hands. But whether Cousin Bess met him in the garden or in the avenue, or gave him a lover's welcome in the tapestry-draped parlour, we shall never know. It is all one now. But certain it is that when next John Dalrymple was seen he was riding his horse at a furious gallop down the road for Oxenford, with Cousin Bess sitting on the pillion beside him. That very day they were married in the Beech-tree Knowe Wood, near by the place where the old house of Cranstoun once stood, and the parish minister tied the knot.

The runaway match was a nine-days' wonder. The country folks were all agape at the news. The gentry franked letters to one another with this latest tit-bit of gossip, putting it demurely thus, as Charles Brown did to an acquaintance: "Your friend, John Dal-

rymple younger of Cousland, was married on Thursday to his cousin Miss Hamilton, heiress of Fala and Oxfoord, but without her father's consent."

But hereaway thereaway, the thing was done, and Bess Dalrymple, as she now was, had wedded her true love as many another has done before and since, taking her luck in her own hands. She had got her way in this, as she got it in most things afterwards. For she was the wise woman and the magerful to the end.

Those were the days when every Scots laird and his lady lived in close relationship with their tenants and neighbours. The girnel and the dovecote, the poultry run and the spinning wheel, were all under the eye of the laird's lady; and while Sir John soon settled down to reading and writing in his bookroom, Lady Bess took the affairs of the place into her grippy hands, and ruled her retinue with a rod of iron. It was a fine ploy, doubtless, for Sir John to be writing the *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*, and confounding both Lord Russel and Algernon Sydney at his desk in-by. But, out-by, Lady Bess was busy with her cockerels and eerocks, and looking to the contents of the grain girnel and cowhouse. The spinning wheel was never idle when she was at home, and every bonnet laird and lease-holder about the place knew well the nip of Lady Betty's tongue. To this very day the old folks relate traditions of the laird's lady as a resourceful, original, frugal mistress, who took her own way of wringing the uttermost farthing out of her literary husband's tenantry.

To the generality of folk she was known as Lady Bess, but among the farmers and their wives as they

trudged along the country roads to Oxenford on a rent day, she was spoken of as Lady Hungry. Well for her that her good man, the unobtrusive laird, was for ever seeping his brains in reflections and scholarly lore, for it left her free to domineer over the house and lands of Oxenford.

In the eighteenth century, part of the rent of every Scots farm was paid in kind. Money was scarce, and produce often took the place of siller. A very common way of making good what was owing to the laird was for each tenant farmer's wife to bring so many kain hens. The kain hens had to be produced alive. So it was a common sight in country places at term time to see a douce-like woman labouring along the road for miles to the laird's place with a whole circle of living hens hanging head downwards from her muckle waistband, and carrying a bairnie in her arms. The wee one would crow with delight when the hens began to cackle. But great was the mother's chagrin when one of the kain hens managed to break away. Then began for her, who was both fowl-begirdled and baby-burdened, a droll hen-hunt. If the fowls were only chickens, then two were demanded in place of a full-grown hen, and one of the standing bickers betwixt a laird's lady and a hen-wife on rent day was—Is it a hen or only an eerock? And the old folk have it that Lady Hungry was never cheated, but got a hen for every day in the year.

The laird's dovecote, too, was her especial care. For the stone dovecote in the park, with its high gable end and one-sided roof, was the domestic larder of every great Scots house. Hundreds of pigeons flew in and

out and rested themselves on the pete stones of the roof. Indeed, these step gables, which are such a feature of ancient Scots architecture, had their origin in this same love of pigeon-breeding for the laird's dinner-table. For the step stones were placed on purpose on the gable ends of Scots houses that the pigeons might have plenty of resting-places when they came home weary with flight. Pigeon pie was a common dish at country folk's tables. But so great damage did the lairds doos work on the tenant farmer's crops, feeding themselves for the laird's benefit on the golden grain at harvest time, that in later times a law was passed forbidding even a laird to keep a full dovecote.

But Lady Hungry was a law unto herself, as she sat receiving rent in grain or siller, in cockerels or eerocks. Her eye was gleg and her tongue was nippy. But to the just, though never generous, she was always fair.

One rent day, a farmer, who was overly near and had cheated the laird on a former occasion, came forward to pay his rent. Lady Hungry eyed him with silent wrath, and calmly held out her hand for the money. When she had received the rent in full, she slipped it into the money bag without making any more ado. Then she went on taking the other rents, writing out a receipt for each tenant as he paid, but entirely overlooking the miserly farmer, who stood waiting impatiently among the crowd of countrymen, wondering why he had got no receipt.

"John," said Lady Hungry, "what are you waiting for? Pay your rent like the lave and be gone."

"My leddy, I hae paid ye the rent."

"Then where's your receipt?"

And she held out her hand without another word. The man protested, but the evidence was all against him.

"Aweel, John, if your rent's no' paid this verra nicht, the Byres will be set to another."

And the rent was paid a second time before the darkening.

But it is ill to get the better of a miser. So when next rent day came round, John was there. Keeping well in mind how sorely he had been bitten, he threeped that he would not pay over his money this time before he had been given a receipt.

"Bide a wee, John," said Lady Hungry, "and let me see the siller before I write the receipt."

John held out a bunch of notes, and with a smile Lady Hungry passed over the receipt to him.

"Aweel, my leddy, noo that I hae gotten the receipt, yon dooble payment o' last year will dae brawly for this year as weel, seein' I hae juist this year o' my tack to run. Guid-day, my leddy."

And that lease was never renewed.

But Sandy Pendreigh, the Pathhead joiner, fared even worse than John of the Byres. He had done some work at the Castle, and came down to receive payment of his account. The man had not the decency to shave himself, and was in a very disjacket condition. This angered her pernickety ladyship, and she refused on the spot to pay him the money.

She made a bargain, however, with Sandy. For, with a knowing smile, she promised to salute him on

the cheek exactly as she did the laird if he would be content with that. Poor Sandy was delighted with the proposal, and, thinking to receive much pleasure, agreed. Presently, he found himself pinned down on a chair by a servant, a towel was tied about his neck, while my Lady Maksiccar calmly proceeded to shave him close and clean.

"Now," said she when it was all over, "I serve nae man for nought. Ye maun pay me weel for shaving ye. So tak' back your account. We're quits, Sandy, my man."

It was to this same Lady Hungry's Castle of Oxenford that Samuel Johnson, the great Lexicographer, was invited to dine with the neighbouring gentry one Saturday night of the year 1772. It was to be the last place of stay before setting out for London again after the famous tour. But Boswell resolved that the great man should pay a visit to Roslin and Hawthornden on the way out. Had not Ben Jonson visited the learned Drummond at Hawthornden long, long ago? So must Sam Johnson stand on the same spot.

So they rumbled out to Hawthornden from Edinburgh, and became so lost in talk of Drummond's poetry that they were still many miles from Oxenford when the night fell. Yet, for this feast Lady Hungry had killed a seven-year-old sheep! The company were wearied with waiting, the dinner was waesomely spoiled, and Sir John was out of all humour when the two truant guests arrived.

But what of the temper and the tongue of Lady Elizabeth? Even Boswell had not courage to describe the scene when their siccar hostess, who had wasted

a seven-year-old sheep on them, received them. So he wisely added this weighty word to his journal that night: "Our conversation was not brilliant."

Whether it was their own ill-conduct or the rebuke of the caustic lady that made them uneasy in the great rooms of Oxenford, the pair of them left the house before their stay was out, and with the poor excuse of readier convenience went on to an inn a few miles farther up the road. There, Scotland saw the last of Samuel Johnson. For, after one night's sojourn in this roadside change-house, he set out for London next morning in the Royal Mail coach and four.

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But that is an old Scots song which was ended long ago. For Sir John and his good wife Lady Bess have been sleeping side by side these eighty years in Cranstoun kirkyard near to the very Beech Knowe Wood where, on the snell March day so long ago, they were married by a pawkie minister with a steaming horse standing close by.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE LAST OF THE OLD SCOTS BURIAL CUSTOMS

CHAPTER TWELVE THE LAST OF THE OLD SCOTS BURIAL CUSTOMS

JUST AS OUR FOREBEARS HAD THEIR own peculiar rites and customs at weddings and christenings, so when it came to the hinder end of all things, they had their strange ways at death. The stopping of the wag-at-the-wa' clock whenever the spirit had fled, to mind the company that for their dead friend at least all time was done; the laying of a plateful of salt on the body to preserve it; the opening of the door to let the spirit go its way to a better world; the burying of the boots to keep the ghost from walking—all these and many more weird habits of death were observed by the old Scots folk of long ago. And in many a back-lying parish or distant island round the coasts of Scotland you will find these dark ways in vogue to this very day.

But there is one weird death ceremony that is still observed in the old seaport town and in quiet country places. Dwellers in cities and those who have been born and bred in places whose roots of tradition do not reach away back into the past may never have heard of it. But still it lingers with us, and the very folk who observe it have not enough knowledge of ancient things to know the purely secular origin of its religious latter-day significance.

It is the ceremony of Chesting the Dead.

The coffin, or chest, having been made, the death kist is carried to the house of mourning, and there, in the presence of a great company of those who are related to the deceased, the body, having been already dressed in the shroud and prepared for burial, is lifted on broad bands of linen and placed in the coffin or kist.

It is accounted the peculiar honour of the nearest relatives to take hold of an end of each band during the lifting process, and many a gruesome scene takes place when the little bairns greet and happy young folks are sent into the hysterics of fright if they happen to have to lend a hand at the lifting.

Then the minister reads and prays and improves the dark occasion, and after his back is turned, or, if he happens to be of a like mind in these sobering things, before he leaves, refreshments are handed round, and the memory of the dead is solemnly pledged.

In ancient times, a kisting was a great occasion for gossip and whisky-drinking, and well do I mind seeing a glass of whisky spilled over a coffin. But the kisting is seldom kept now except in the old, ancient places like our own seaport town, which is full of hame-biding folks who hold hard by the coat-tails of the past. Be the household ever so irreligious, and despite the fact that the corpse when in life never had any trokings with the kirk, there must be both a kisting and a burial service, with a prayer from the minister at both.

So our religion is whiles two-thirds superstition, and many a decent body would be better laid away with a simple committal prayer than kisted and buried with all the show of honest religion at death where there never has been any in life.

But the strange humour of the custom is that the origin of this old Scots death ceremony of kisting lies in politics, and not in religion!

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Before the Union of the Parliaments, when Scotland and England were commercial competitors, flax was

grown and linen was very largely woven in both countries. The siccar members of the Scots Parliament, therefore, passed a law in 1694 enacting that every dead body should be shrouded in a sheet of plain home-spun linen, without lace or point. This was a measure of protection, in order to foster the languishing trade of home-made linen in Scotland. For at that time the English merchants threatened to flood the Scots market with imported linen. To make this Act a reality, the Scots Parliament passed another Act in the following year, 1695, enjoining that the nearest elder or deacon, with one or two neighbours, "should be present at the putting-in of the dead corpse in the coffin, that they may see the same done." The minister of the parish, being the chief official in all matters pertaining to parochial law, was always there, and being sweart to let the function go by without improving the occasion, offered up a prayer.

In the course of time, however, the linen industry in Scotland revived, and needed no longer the protection of law, but the woollen industry began to fail. So again, in 1705, the Linen Act of 1694 was repealed, and another Act passed, ordering that every corpse was to be swathed in plain Scots *woollen* cloth, with the same provision, that so many of the parish officials were to be present at the kisting to see the law carried into force.

Then, two years after, in 1707, came the Union of the Scots and English Parliaments, and all need for protective Acts was done away. But the parish minister by this time had become accustomed to the religious side of the ceremony of kisting; and when the

political need for it was abolished, the religious aspect, which he himself had imposed, remained.

So the minister and elders kept up the service, and in old places to-day the chesting ceremony still survives.

How little the douce folk that gather at a kisting, to hear the Scripture read and offer up a prayer, realise how materialistic and political and self-defensive this gruesome ceremony of the death chamber originally was. To foster trade, to keep the siller and the sales to ourselves, and to pursue a home-drawn policy for Scotland in its poor days against the riches and the merchandise of England—that was the true origin of chesting.

Dark with mystery, at the very best, is the Away-going at last for us all. And in the olden days our forebears, who had the uncanny, wistful sense of the unseen, used to indulge many a freit and norie about death. A cock that kept crowing more than usual at night was so sure a sign of death that any who heard it would go out to the henroost and see in what airt its head was pointing. The howling of dogs, or the shying of horses in the dark; birds like the robin tapping at the window on a winter's morning; the laughter of a screech-owl—all these things were foregangs of death.

But the real foregang was the corpse candle, or the will o' the wisp, which travelled in the direction of the person whose doom was foretold, and always took the road which the funeral was afterwards to follow.

Professional beggars usually swarmed at funerals, and after the mourners themselves had been refreshed with ale and shortbread and oatcakes before the

lifting, the poor folks were fed with what had been specially provided for them; and this custom gathered great numbers of beggars and gangrels to funerals in old Scots days. The bellman would pass through the village with a tinkle of his bell and shout an invitation to all and sundry to come to the funeral. In the ancient town of Providence and the Pressgang the beadle went up and down the streets with the dead-bell proclaiming as follows: "All brethren and sisters, I let you to wit there is a brother departed at the pleasure of the Almighty"—here he lifted his hat—"called Andrew Duguid. All those that come to the burial come at two o'clock. The corpse is at Corbiehall." And at the funeral itself the beadle walked before the coffin ringing the dead-bell.

Here is an ancient account of the expenses for a funeral in the year 1795, and the paper on which it is written is very old and frail and brown to-day:

10 March 1795, Ane account of the ffuneral charges of John Muirhead my father for—

the Coffan			1 15 00
To Bread			3 10 02
To Wines			2 09 08¾
To Rum			1 02 00
To Whiskey			0 10 00
To Bear			0 2 06
			9 09 04¾
	To mortcloth		0 02 06
			9 11 10¾

Little wonder that an observant Englishman once declared that a Scots funeral was merrier than an English wedding. For at the beginning of the eighteenth century the women, clad in their gayest and brightest

dresses, walked as far as the kirkyard gate, leaving the men to go to the grave. And if the goodman of the house had lost his wife, it was an old custom in Scotland that he of all the company should stay at home; for James Boswell wrote in 1789, after the death of his wife: "It is not customary in Scotland for a husband to attend the funeral of his wife; but I resolved, if I possibly could, to do the last honours myself." And when the good wife lost her husband, the door of the house was painted black, and all bedecked with great white pear-shaped commas to represent the tears shed for the departed.

So strong was the desire of Scots folk in olden days to have a wise-like funeral that in high life we know of a dying laird whose last words to his son were, "For God's sake give them a hearty drink"—and in low life, where the family of the deceased was very poor, the Kirk Session, rather than see the humble folk beat, supplied the festivities themselves out of the kirk funds, paying for ale and tobacco and pipes, and adding £2 to the relatives. A respectable funeral and a decent shroud were so essential to the frugal Scots mind that a woman spun her own winding-sheet when preparing her bridal clothes, took it out every year with reverence and aired it, and laid it again in the aumrie among the lavender-scented clothes.

In remote times and places there was seldom any religious service at the grave, because after the Reformation the stern Scot was afraid of any religious act in connection with death that savoured of Popery or superstition. The funeral, therefore, was treated as a civil act, and the minister, whether an Episcopalian

TO SLOCKEN THE TAPS

or a Presbyterian, had no professional part at a burial, although his presence was usual.

After the refreshments at the house were over, the company set out for the kirkyard, carrying the coffin in relays and raising a little cairn of stones at each resting-place. It is to be feared that each rest very often meant another refreshment, for it is on solemn record that when the mother of Forbes of Culloden was buried, the whole company arrived at the grave only to discover that the corpse had been left behind.

Then on the return of the relatives to the house there was another feast called the Dredgy, which was a survival of the old popish word *Dirige*.

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But these things are like a sough from another world to us now. The last sound of the sough is the chesting of the dead, which, like other gruesome rites of the ancient Scots burials, will soon be altogether a thing of the past. We go more doucely and soberly to our account now, and it is of God's own mercy that we hap up our beloved in the old kirkyard with simple reverence and certain hope of a resurrection to come through our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
SACRAMENT SUNDAY

CHAPTER XIII SACRAMENT SUNDAY

DEAREST OF ALL THE DAYS ON CHRIST'S calendar in Fairshiels is the holy day of the Sacrament. Since the time when our fathers held their conventicles in the wilderness, the Communion tables have been spread in many a strange place. Even yet, when the sun rises gloriously on a quiet Sabbath morning, one who has the seer's vision can see many a picture of the past as the homely Scots men and women come forward to pay their vows to the Lord.

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There rises first the vision of a day long gone by when John Blackader of Troqueer and John Welsh of Irongray, two far-famed preachers of the Covenant, came to dispense the sacrament to Christ's outed folk at East Nisbet in the border country.

It is a heartsome, holy scene. The Communion tables are spread in a green haugh by a burnside, while all around the people are seated on a rising amphitheatre of heathery braes to hear the Word of God. High up above them, on the sky-line yonder, the sun glints on the arms of the guardsmen who have convoyed the worshippers to their place of prayer. They stand now to watch over them that they may worship God in peace.

Remembering the ark of Israel which sojourned in the desert for years, Scots men and women have ever been willing to worship in tabernacles not made with hands. These were the days when the Kirk was rich in Christ, when the people heard the Word from the lips of those very men who had lost all for Christ's sake, and when the tables were served by gentlemen and

peasants side by side on the green pastures and by the still waters.

The communicants entered at one end of the two long linen-clad boards and passed out at the other, to make way for the constant stream of new-comers from the brae-face. A hundred sat at each table, and there were sixteen tables in all. About three thousand two hundred souls remembered Christ that day in the sequestered haugh by the burnside when John Blackader and John Welsh fed the souls of God's own folk with the Bread of Life. Like a sough of summer winds, the sound of the psalm rose and fell in the green cup among the Border hills, and the sentries on the heights turned for a moment with breasts that heaved with holy pride to look on that huddled flock of the Covenant whose only crime was Christ, as one who has the true heart has so fitly said. Then, when the great day was over, the horsemen drew together into a body, and convoyed the worshippers back once more to their homes.

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Again the vision changes, and when the youngest of the folks at Nisbet have passed away, a little wooden tent or preaching booth rises on a green field by the old draw-well at Fairshiels. It is called the Tent Field to this very day. For there the first Seceders came to hear the Word and to break bread in the name of Christ who had called them out. From north and south and east and west they came to the Tent Field on holy days, and once more the songs of Zion were borne adown the summer breeze.

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Yet again the vision changes, this time to Humbie Dean close by Fairshiels, where Christ's disrupted folk were forced to worship of their own will and conscience in the name of Him who had made them free. Up the bosky burnside to a green hazel dell these later children of the Covenant came as their forefathers had come before them, from the heathery Lammermoors and the farm places to the preachings and the Sacraments. For, ever since the cruel Grassmarket days, even until this present, God's own folk in Scotland have set conscience first and the world second.

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It is with a solemn sense of all these things in his soul that the minister of Fairshiels stands up in his black gown and white bands to give out the opening psalm at the summer sacrament. He looks with pride on his flock as he sees them standing up to sing. They are the children of the Lord's inheritance in the grey Scots land—plain country men and women singing God's praise where their forebears in Christ sang before them. The psalm is sung with slow, solemn measure, unaided by instrument or organ. The snow-white cloth is spread on the plain old table, which has upheld the symbols of Christ's dying love for generations. The ancient pewter cups and flagons and the little wicker baskets are covered with fine linen napkins. The very plates on which the people's offerings to God are placed are hidden under snowy cloths. Everywhere—in the pew, on the table, at the doors of the kirk—is to be seen the fine white linen of the saints, which to Christ's Kirk in Scotland, as to the Israelites of old, has ever been the symbol of a clean heart and a right spirit.

In these present days of costly churches and elaborate ceremonial, it is like a rest to the weary spirit to enter Fairshiels Kirk on a Sacrament Sunday and hear the Word of God declared in peace, in quietness, and with reverence—to look upon the faces of the country folks who have travelled far to make their vows—and to hear the Communion paraphrase sung to the well-kenned tune—

'Twas on that night, when doom'd to know
The eager rage of ev'ry foe,
That night in which He was betray'd,
The Saviour of the world took bread.

How the heart wells up with pure emotion as the singing rises and falls! How the old days and the old folks live again, as the ancient custom of the song creates a whole world of holy memories and affections and resolves! And as it draws to a close, how full of fervent ecstasy is the soul of the minister as he sees the old elders reverently uncovering the sacred symbols of the Saviour's dying love, and hears his faithful flock singing these never-to-be-forgotten words—

With love to man this cup is fraught,
Let all partake the sacred draught;
Through latest ages let it pour,
In mem'ry of My dying hour.

In Fairshiels Kirk at communion seasons there are no external aids to devotion. There—while the low, even voice of the minister leads his people into something of the meaning of the mystery of Christ's love—each man and woman's soul is introduced to the very presence of the Eternal. And in the hush of silence that follows, the Spirit of God steals into the heart and works the mystic miracle of grace. In silence the bread

is broken. In silence the wine is passed. In silence the sins are confessed. In silence the new vows are made.

Here, surely, is the simplicity that is in Christ. Here, in this holy sacrament of silence, far from the sounds of the world, far from the crowded haunts of men, within the old plain kirk, and shut securely in the soul's secret audience chamber with themselves and God, some have been able to see God face to face, to hear as in a trance the accents of His still small voice, and to get wondrous close to the heart of the Eternal that lies beneath the wounded side of Christ.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
THE OLD DOCTOR

CHAPTER XIV THE OLD DOCTOR

THE OLD ORDER IS CHANGING WITH doctors as with all other things in the quiet country places, and already the motor-car is taking the place of the high two-seated gig. We appreciate the new, quick, wonderful ways of bringing life into the world, of keeping life well and fit when we have it, and of reviving the spark of life in the weak and old when it is like to flicker out; but we can never forget the patience, the self-sacrifice, and the leal-hearted dourness of the old country doctor, who had to get the better of difficulties which the new generation cannot even imagine to win at a patient who lived in some remote, pathless place.

So to those of us who climbed the brae in the spring sunshine that day these many years ago to follow the Old Doctor to his lown resting-place in the old kirk-yard, it was a heartsome, moving sight to see the great gathering that filled the steep, red-tiled village street from end to end. It was as though the whole countryside had come together to listen to the last of an old song.

We called him the Old Doctor—not that he was a done man, but because he was the father of the young doctor. The bent, grey-headed folks who were standing so solemnly at their doors in the sun, leaning on their sticks, would tell you how he came to them a winsome, fair-complexioned lad of parts forty years ago. And it was old Kirsty Laidlaw, the herd's wife at Costerton, who glowered in wonder at the young doctor the first time he stood by her bedside and said—

"And who may ye be, my laddie?"

"I'm the doctor's son."

"Eh, sirs the day! Do ye tell me that? I wadna hae kent ye for the doctor's son. For your faither was a rale bonny lad when he was your age."

But Kirsty is long since dead, and now the Old Doctor has followed her to the same kirkyard and the same Land of the Leal, where the oldest and best of friends are blythe to meet once more.

For all these forty years he served the countryfolk about him hand and foot, day and night, year in year out, without a grudge, and as a very perfect Christian gentleman. Snow-bound in winter and deathly cold on the heights; sweet and smiling in spring-time, when the winter blasts are over and the eye can sweep the far horizons of hill and sea and rolling land most splendidly; and a very garden of the Lord in the height of summer, when the grassy hills are flecked with sheep innumerable and the great fields are yellow with grain—it is a high, snell, wind-swept countryside at best, lying far remote from towns, ten miles this way and ten miles that way from the doctor's house. Every corner of its five or six parishes was filled with the doctor's healing mercy, and in every castle and cothouse, in every farmplace and manse, he was welcomed with a sigh of relief in any time of trouble.

On a bleak winter night, when the roads were blocked with snow and the hills were lying asleep and still under their dead white shrouds, I have seen him muffled to the ears riding slowly along the highway in the moonlight on his old white mare. Many a time he has slept with weariness on the mare's back or sitting in the high gig on his way home. But the friendly pair of

them understood each other so well that they always reached home together and in perfect safety.

He was a man of many coats. For it is a bitter world in the Lammermoors. So, summer or winter, the old doctor was "aye weel-happit," as we say.

"Doctor," one said to him once, "is it true what they say—that you never wear more than five coats?"

"There or thereabouts," he answered, with a laugh.

And his laugh was unforgettable. Long and hearty and splendid—the boisterous mirth of this big, buirdly, clean-souled man, who dearly loved a joke, came rolling out like the sound of many waters. For he had that essential quality of all good physicians—an infection of good cheer about him, which revived a weary patient like the best medicine whenever the doctor entered the sick-room.

The long, bitter, midnight drives, in sleet or snow or blinding sheets of rain, never seemed to chill the warmth of his big-hearted nature. Trustworthy to a fault, never in a hurry, and always particular to show an old-world courtesy to women and bairns, he brought home our sweetest gifts of life for two generations, and never was heard to grumble at the steep hills or the wildest storms.

Wisely reticent about every patient, he was a terror to the gossip, and could be acid enough in his speech to any long-nosed body who was a trifle over-curious.

"What's wrang wi' Tam Todd's wife, doctor?" said a clippy-tongued, about-the-doors mistress once.

"What's wrang wi' yersel', that ye are speiring?" said he, as he gathered up the reins and was off.

Or when some silver-tongued dame quizzed him

inordinately, he would lift his hat with his blandest smile and say, "Good-day to you, ma'am."

A true friend, and the worst hand at gossip in the whole parish, was the old doctor, as all fine gentlemen should be.

Like most of his kind, he had an inborn weakness for good horse flesh. For he came of farming folks, and could measure a beast or a crop at a glance. He kept three driving beasts, and never once let the thought of a patient interfere with his careful seeing to the up-putting of his horse on his late arrival at any house. How often we stood in the stable with the lantern shaking in our hands and wondering if he would never be done with what seemed to an anxious father and husband a needless waste of time over a dumb brute. But the Old Doctor knew better, for he could gauge the urgency of the case, and at the same time understand that the life of many a patient far away depended on the good care he took of his horse flesh.

Some of us will for ever associate the advent days of our children with the names of the Old Doctor's horses. For it was always the same. After a long, anxious journey on foot for miles in a wet, dark night, there was a fumbling for the door bell, and then a mischancy voice of bell music in the dead silence of the village street. For the doctor's bell was loud to nervous ears, and there was a terrible indifference about its ring.

First a light would appear, then a blind would be drawn, and last of all a head would appear at an open window above the door. The breathless message was delivered and received.

Then the cheery, practical voice rang out.

"Knock at the groom's window, the second to the right, and tell him to yoke *Nancy*," or "tell him to put the *Countess* in."

And accordingly *Nancy* meant Wee Margaret and the *Countess* meant Wee Janet to us ever afterwards.

To town dwellers who live with a docter in the next street and a chemist's shop at every corner, it is dooms difficult to give even a slight idea of the place that a country doctor holds in the life and the love of his patients, who may bide in houses that are five, ten, or fifteen miles away from him. Only those of us who have helped him to beat back death at midnight in a lonely house far up among the sleeping hills will ever know how much we owe to him. His house in the village street, with its back garden beaking in the sun, like his own warm soul, was the centre of the hopes and fears, the health and sickness, the life and death of a whole countryside.

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But the high gig will never be seen again on the Lammermoor roads. *Nancy* is dead, and when I looked in at the stable on the funeral day the old *Countess* looked waesome and done as she thrust out her nose in the loose-box to be stroked. The two-seated gig was gone, and a silent motor stood instinct with new life and new ways in the coach-house instead.

A long line of carriages and cars, traps and country conveyances of every kind and condition, wended their way to the secluded kirkyard at Crichton, where, under the shadow of the ancient kirk he loved, the Old Doctor was silently and reverently laid to rest a-

mong his own bairns. He had brought so many of them home, and he had said good-bye to so many of them when they were sweart to go, and now he has won Home himself to the place where he wished with all his heart to be.

The snowdrops bestar the mossy turf of this rose-scented God's acre like messengers of eternal hope. The birds sing their spring songs in the great trees which the good monks planted long ago. The sun, like the love of God, which is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, shines down on the douce country-folk out of the clear blue sky. And there, with the clean sweet winds of springtide wafting the sound of a prayer over the green howes, we leave the Old Doctor with God, to sleep his hinmost slumber, which, after forty years of Christ-like sacrifice, he won without reproach.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN
THE VILLAGE PARLIAMENT

"If there's a hole in a' your coats
I rede you tent it:
A chield's amang you taking notes,
And faith, he'll prent it."

THE FAIRSHIELS PARLIAMENT MEETS at a stile, and there are only three members—Andrew Brockie the road-mender, Tamson the smith, and Weary Willie the publican.

These three men stood every evening for an hour together at a point on the main road which commanded a view of all the roads in Fairshiels. Anyone standing at the stile beneath a spreading beech tree can see a stranger entering the village from any quarter of the compass—from East Lothian, from the moor, from the city, and from the south over Soutra. Tamson the smith, being a widower, stood the whole evening, and on Sundays the whole day, only going home for meals; Andrew Brockie, the road-mender, who had the best of wives at home, joined him for an hour because, as he expressed it, he had "muckle sympathy wi' Jock in his weedowhood"; and Weary Willie the publican, who had been born tired, was glad to take an airing after his hard day's work.

It happened, at this time, that a lonely house on Fairshiels Moor called Solvendy Lodge had found a tenant. The house had stood empty for so long, and the villagers had been so often befooled with rumours of a new lease-holder, that this time they only smiled. When, however, first a mason, then a plumber, and finally a paper-hanger came out from town under orders from the factor, the new tenant of Solvendy became a possibility and no mere myth.

Then indeed the three members of parliament began to keep late hours.

"I hear the new tenant's going to keep a pair o' horse," said the smith, casting his eye over the sky.

He was the weather prophet in Fairshiels and the premier gossip. As a matter of fact, he had heard nothing whatever. That troubled him. So it became all the more necessary for him to state dogmatically that he had heard something. This is Fairshiels logic. For to know nothing is to be disqualified.

But Andrew Brockie the road-mender knew without looking at him that the smith's eye was really on a possible order for horseshoes even while it was scanning the evening sky.

"Then," said the road-mender, following his leader, "if that's the case, he'll be having the Solvendy road redd up."

And he in turn began calculating to a rakeful the metal that would be required to repair the two miles of road between Fairshiels and Solvendy. And as he worked out the mathematics of the business, Andrew Brockie tilted his cap over his eye and scratched the back of his head.

"For my ain pairt," observed Weary Willie the publican, "I'm no' minding very much so lang's he's no' a beegoted teetotaller. I canna stand folk that's abune takin' a dram."

"That's nae doot the reason why ye aye like to sit them doon to their drams when they come to you," said the road-mender, "for there's aye mair made oot o' folk that *sit* and drink than oot o' folk that *stand* and drink."

"I'll no' argue the pint wi' ye, Andrew, seeing ye are

sic a fractious body, but Jock here is no' abune takin' a dram."

"I can tak' it and I can leave it," replied the smith, with his eye suddenly fixed on the road before him, as if he had just noticed something, "but I dinna *sell* drink. I'm thinking there's a difference there, Andrew. Eh?"

"Ay—there's a great difference. You and me's no' Weary Willie. That's the difference. And, Tamson—when it comes to the bit, I'm no' you neither in the matter o' taking drink."

"Hoots, man, Andrew—you, a breaker o' stanes on the roadside! My certy, ye hae surely come as far doon as a man can come in this worl'," nipped out the nettled publican.

"No, Willie lad. Ye're wrang. I micht tak' to sellin' drams yet. And as for breakin' stanes on the roadside, I wad rather mak' an honest bawbee breakin' stanes than hunners o' pounds breakin' my neebours. There's a difference."

The publican, who was a small man with no power of repartee, cast about in his mind for some excuse to change the subject, but finding none, he took out his pipe and lit it.

"But, aboot the new tenant, Jock," continued the road-mender.

"Ay—what aboot him? It's no' easy sayin'. But I'll gang this length—he's no' here yet. He couldna be here and me no' ken."

"That's true," said the road-mender, turning round and winking solemnly at the invisible. It was his way.

"No' very likely," echoed the publican, whose am-

bition it was to be able to understand things like the smith, and say things like the road-mender. "But here comes the minister."

All three turned and looked at the minister coming round the corner of the moor road.

"Good evening, sir," said Weary Willie glibly.

"Good evening, men."

"Hae ye heard tell aught o' the new tenant o' Solvendy, sir? We would like to be prepared, as it were, fornent his arrival. Andrew here maintains that he is no' like to come for a whilie, seein' there's been nae word o' mendin' the green road. Jock says he's a gentleman o' means wi' a great wheen o' horses."

The publican laughed at his own humour, which was invariably second-hand.

"And what say you yourself, Willie?" inquired the minister, looking at him with a pair of solemn, innocent eyes.

"He says, minister," interrupted the road-mender, "that it's a' ane to him so lang as the new tenant kens hoo to empty bottles—the wish o' Weary Willie being faither to his muckle thochts, his unco wise words, and the very siller in his till."

"Me!"

"Ay—you."

And the minister noticed, with a perfectly stolid face, the withering contempt that shot from the road-mender's eye as he glanced sideways at the publican.

"Well, men, what I say is that you are, after all, poor hands at putting two and two together. For the tenant of Solvendy arrived last night. I've just been there. Good evening all."

The minister had the dramatic soul in him, and knew when to speak and when to keep silent. So he passed on, leaving them confounded beyond all speech.

"God bless my soul!" gasped the publican at last.

"It bates a'," said Andrew Brockie, looking after his minister, who, he knew, was laughing at them in his heart.

"I thocht that a' the time," exclaimed the smith, slapping his leg with his hand.

"Thocht what a' the time?"

"That the new man had come."

"Explain yersel'."

"I hae thocht it this last half-hour, because o' thae braid wheel-marks on the road there. See! Thae's no' ordinar' wheel marks. Thae's the braid wheel tracks o' a furniture van. My grief! did I no' hear an awfu' rumblin' o' heavy wheels at twae or three o'clock this mornin'? I was clean aff my sleep wi' thinkin' o' Solvendy. Gosh! To think o' what we hae missed, when we were a' lyin' in our beds like eediots! But I canna thole to think o't. I'm aff for my supper."

The smith was evidently cut to the quick at the loss of his reputation.

"Frien's," cried the road-mender, taking his hands slowly from his pockets, "the Solvendy road 'll no' be dune under a hunner and fifty rake o' rough and twenty-five rake o' sma'. But it's time we were a' hame. This is awfu' sudden news. But news is aye sudden when it comes frae ither folk."

So the three veterans went home, each with a burning appetite for news—not for supper. They tried to blind each other with a reference to the evening meal.

But they soon found each other out. For an hour after sundown, three men stumbled across one another in the dark on the road opposite Solvendy Lodge. Each had taken a different road, leaving a supper untouched at home. Each had now discovered the others trying to avoid detection on the moorland road. But in vain.

"Can that be you, Andrew?"

"I'll no' deny but it micht be me, Jock."

"Then whaur's Weary Willie?"

"He's hunkering ower there at the dyke. He thinks we dinna see him."

"I'm no'. I'm juist tying my shoe lace."

"Oh, man! Ye haena brains eneuch to tell lees. Come oot o' that."

And the three men were glad for once that it was dark.

"Weel, Tamson—what news? I saw ye striking a match when I was ower there."

"Ye did? Weel, the road's a' wet here. There hae been twae furniture wagons wi' a pair o' horse the piece—besides a dog cairt wi' a cob. But I'll hear mair afore lang, for the shoe on the cob's near forefit is lowse. Hae ye onything to add, Andrew?"

The smith was proud of his detective work, but the road-mender took no notice.

"Let Willie speak first," he only said.

"Oh, me! I hae nae great hopes o' the new tenant, for I found this at the back door. They hae evidently brocht their ain supplies wi' them, the scoondrels—and nae great thing at that."

Here the publican held up a lemonade bottle.

"Noo, Andrew."

"Hoots, ye hae baith been takin' up your attention wi' mere trifles. I'll tell ye something if ye'll only haud your tongues."

And the road-mender held up a luggage label!

"What's that? Did ye read it?" whispered the smith hoarsely.

"Ay did I."

"In the dark, man?"

"No. I'm gey clever in my ain wey, but I'm no' that clever. I struck a licht like yersel'—and yet, no' juist like yersel' either."

"Hoo could that be? I never saw your licht, and I hae been here for half an 'oor!"

"I daursay no', for I sat doon wi' my back to the Lodge, and did it atween my legs."

"Megsty me! You for a heepocrite!" exclaimed the publican.

"But oot wi' your news, man! What's on the paper?" said the smith, with a sinking heart.

The road-mender waved his hand in a deprecating manner against the summer afterglow.

"The new tenant's name is Mr. John Cunninghame —he comes frae London—and he spells Fairshiels wi' a D. Frien's, I'm for hame."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN
SUMMER SHIELINGS IN THE GLEN

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

SUMMER SHIELINGS IN THE GLEN

YOU WILL FIND THEM ALL OVER THE hills of Scotland, in Highlands and Lowlands and Hebrid Isles—little green hillocks and open spaces high up the hillside or the glen, with rickles of grey stones and heaps of ruined walls by the side of the brown burn. To come on them to-day, when the evening sun is shining and the plovers and whaups are mingling their cries with the husheen of the mountain stream, is like reading the romance of an olden Scots life that has gone from us never again to return.

I can see them in many a remote place while I write—far up the sides of Lawers; behind Schiehallion, where the deer are feeding now; among the lonely Lammermoors; or far out in Skye or Harris, where to-day the salt Atlantic winds are blowing. But always in my dreamings of the shieling days I come back to a place of ruins far up in a little glen that runs from the spatey Lyon River right into the heart of Lawers and Ben Glass. For there, one summer eve, I sat with one whose heart has in it the deep understanding of the hills, and whose eyes can see far ben into the dim-lit regions of the long ago. After a great day on the hills, whose sun-baked tops were still patchy with winter snow, we sat down among the shielings to rest when the sun was setting. Ballad and song floated out in the calm airs of evening to the sound of the crooning stream as we talked of the shieling folk and the ancient customs of the vanished races, till the silent glen was peopled once more about us, and the cattle were lowing at milking time for Mary and Ishbel to come with their stools and coggies.

The summer shielings were little shelters or cot-houses which the glen folk built high up on the hills or corries. There in summer-time the grass was sweet and green, and in the cooler airs the cattle and sheep roamed free. A whole highland township would flit for the summer months from the shoreland or laigh-lying places to the summer shielings, driving their cattle before them; the men doing the herding, and the women following with the little bairns, each carrying some essential dish or bundle of provender for the long sojourn among the hills. The old done bodies, who could no longer climb the steep braes, were left behind in the farm or croft with some to tend them in case of need; and if in the summer-time a stranger came to the township to seek his way, or do some troke of business, he might find the place all empty and deserted.

Oh, it was a happy time of the year when the nights grew warm and light, and the days long with the northern sun that scarcely sleeps, for then it was time to be off to the shielings. The young folks laughed with glee, the older folks got their goods and chattels all together, and the little bairns knew that holiday-time had come, when they could run happy and free among the cattle on the hills, or catch the brown trout in the clear streams.

Once up the glen and arrived at the shielings, the little summer shelters were opened again, and new ones were built for new folks come. See them to-day—these wee, narrow houses built of rough mountain stones, with low doorways and tiny windows. Thatched with turf and rushes, and built of walls so thick that no winter storm could undo them, the shielings

were but summer camps in stone and turf for the ancient peasantry of Scotland. Here in the thick walls of some of them you can still find little square recesses. These were cupboards, or homely contrived dairy presses, for milking-pans to rest in. One, two, three, six, eight—surely in this ruined wall we have the dairy or milk-house, where butter pats and cheeses and bowls of sweet cream rested in the cool darkness under the thatch long ago!

At early morn the shielings were all astir—for the men went out to look at their stock and to herd the sheep, while the lasses, with milking-stools tucked under one arm and a pail under the other, sang as they went up the hills together calling the cows to the milking-place. All through the livelong day the women were busy on the green sward at the burnside churning the butter in the kirns, and pressing the cheeses between the heavy stones. And the little barefooted bairns, free from all the restraints of the dominie, ran about the sunny braes, gathering the blaeberry or the luscious cloudberry higher up, and guddling with bare arms in the burns for the bonny speckled trout which were so sweet to the taste at supper-time.

What sweet singing there was at the milkings in the old shieling days! Many of the most beautiful love-songs which have been handed down to us were composed and sung by the lads and lasses who did their courting far up among the hills in the bonny summer gloamings, when Mary milked the cows and Colin herded them down to her from the pastures.

In the summer nights, too, the cattle and the sheep were sometimes driven away altogether. The Fairies

got the credit of many of these cattle raids, and they invariably carried off a young milkmaid to milk the cows morning, noon, and night. But the Fairies were blamed for what was oftener a regular raid on the shieling herds by wild rieving highland caterans. So on one occasion Colin lost his cattle and Mary his betrothed along with them. On a dark night they were driven away, and when Colin went out in the early morning not a cow was to be seen on his pastures, and no trace of Mary the milker could he find. So, over the hills he wandered, in search of his cattle and his true love; but late or early he neither saw nor heard what his heart and his eyes were seeking. He knew that the cows would not give milk unless they heard the voice of the milkmaid singing—and Mary herself knew well that those who had carried her off with the cattle, whether Fairies or caterans, could not stop her singing her milking songs at the darkening.

So this was the song which she sang to the cattle of Colin each evening, knowing right well that he was seeking her, and would come to her when he heard the voice of her calling—

"A maiden sang sweetly
As a bird on a tree,
Cro' chaillean, Cro' chaillean,
Cro' chaillean for me.

My own Colin's cattle,
Dappled, dun, brown, and grey,
They return to the milking
At the close of the day.

In the morning they wander
To their pastures afar,
Where the grass grows the greenest
By corrie and scaur.

They wander the uplands
Where the soft breezes blow,
And they drink from the fountain
Where the sweet cresses grow.

But so far as they wander,
Dappled, dun, brown, and grey,
They return to the milking
At the close of the day.

My bed's on the shian
On the Canach's soft down,
But I'd sleep best with Colin
In our shieling alone.

Thus a maiden sang sweetly
As a bird on a tree,
Cro' chaillean, Cro' chaillean,
Cro' chaillean for me."

So Colin heard the voice of his beloved singing in the summer night, and followed her from place to place until both cattle and love were found again.

The sheep were sheared by the men, and the wool was all cleaned and prepared by the women at the summer shielings. The peats were cut and cast and stacked in great heaps on the moor to dry. There was plenty of work for old and young, for men and women, for lad and lass, through the long summer days and the short-lived summer nights. It was an ideal open-air life for the whole peasant community.

And then, when the summer died, and the chilly autumn days came, with longer nights and later dawnings, the shielings were deserted once more. The doors in the little stone houses by the burnside were shut, the bairns were gathered together, and the whole happy company wandered down again to the township in the glen, on the laighland, or the seaboard. The cattle

that had been driven up both lean and hungry returned from the green shielings fat and sleek and full of milk. The peats had now to be driven or carried down from the moors to the lowlands. The wool was brought home to be carded and spun, waulked or woven in the long dark winter days and nights at home. And while the women were busy round the peat fires of winter, the men told their tales and legends in *ceilidh*, with the blue reek making wraiths among the black rafters of the kitchen roof, and the faces of listening children peering down from the trap door of the garret, where they were supposed to be long since asleep in their heather beds.

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Such was the happy, romantic life of the summer shielings. It is all gone now. For the glens are empty, and the little houses high up on the hills are lying in heaps of grey ruins with nettles and briers growing all about them in the silence of the grassy banks by the mountain stream.

Up the green glen, by the lonely shielings,
Silence-encircled and far from men—
I hear the songs of an old-time people,
In summer twilights beneath the Ben.

Sweet was the milking song of Mary,
Strong was the love of Alan at parting,
Happy the barefooted children that played there,
By the clear stream, with the brown trout darting.

Now the grey ruins lie scattered and moss-grown
Up in the rain-beaten corrie to-day;
Gone are the milkings with Mary and Alan,
Their children lie dead in a land far away.

The brown stream sings its coronach, keening,
The children of Alan for sheep were banished;

SUMMER SHIELINGS IN THE GLEN

The dancing, the laughter, the happy old faces,
The life of the shielings for ever is vanished.

No more the call of the cattle at dawning,
No more at the *ceilidh* the fine tale is said,
No more will strong men woo lily-white maidens—
The wet winds are moaning lament for the dead.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN
THE LAIRD'S LOFT

CHAPTER XVII THE LAIRD'S LOFT

GREAT PRIDE OUGHT EVERY SCOT TO have in the village of his birth, and to the auld-farrant, steep-braed village of Kilbarchan my mind and heart go back whenever I think of the laird's loft.

The old parish kirk stands still at the bieldy back of the town, with the graves of gentles and simples all about it. But it is stripped of all its ancient glory, for a brand-new house of God has been built but a stone's-throw from it; and as I look at the kirk of 1724, with its quaint tower, its old ivy-covered outside stair, and its little-paned windows winking in the sun, I am minded that this is the true successor of that cell of St. Barchan, Bishop and Confessor, which Walter Fitz-Alan, High Steward of Scotland, gave to the Abbey of Paisley in the days which are now hiding ahint a whole gowpen of centuries.

In this old kirk, with its ancient pews and galleries, the thing that struck the eye of childhood was the ken-speckle wooden shields, emblazoned with the arms of the great families of the district. These shields were hung over the front of the three galleries, where the local lairds had their seats. I can see them yet, after all these years, in this and in many another old country parish kirk in Scotland—the great wide, room-like gallery pew, with table and chairs all set out in a row, and a little door at the back of the loft where the Lord of the Lairdship could enter and leave with his family whenever he liked. To that door at the back of the laird's loft the little stone iron-railed outside stair led up, and close by the found of the stone stair in the kirk-yard was the laird's own family vault, so that when he climbed the stair to his own loft on a Sunday he was

aye minded of man's mortality, and of his own in particular.

For there were many namely lairds who sat in the lairds' lofts in the old kirk of Kilbarchan: the Knoxes of Ranfurly, out of whose ancient family came John Knox himself, the great Reformer of the Kirk, and Andrew Knox, who took the other side, and became a Bishop of the Isles; the Dundonald family, with the Hamiltons of Holmhead and Crawfords of Auchinames; Napiers of Milliken, of the old stock of Napier of Merchiston, famed as landed gentry from the time of Alexander the Third, and in later days for logarithmic inventions; Wallace of Elderslie; Houston of Johnstone; Cunninghame of Craigends—all these ancient lords and lairds in olden times had their faith confirmed in Kilbarchan kirk, and hung their escutcheons over the front of their lofts in the old galleries. To the bairns of a past generation it whiles seemed unfair that the high folks in the lofts should have these bonny painted panels all to themselves, for a few of the old armorial shields still remained. But the laird's loft, like everything old in this ancient land, was but the grand consummation of what had taken centuries to grow out of a very modest beginning.

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It began with that gleg quean Jenny Geddes, who so long ago sat on a wee bit folding-stool in the cathedral kirk of St. Giles and listened in wrath to the voice of Dean Hanna. When he came to the reading of the ritual, Jenny rose, seized her stool, and sent it birling through the dim-lighted kirk straight for the Dean, with this cry of protest that roused auld Scotland into

holy wrath for generations to come: "Ye'll no' say Mass in my lug!"

The laird's loft, with its tables and chairs and painted arms, had its laigh beginning in that same stool of Jenny Geddes.

For before that time men and women who went to worship in the cathedrals or kirks had to stand during service. There was neither seat nor stool. The whole space of the area was free to the parish folk in general.

But human nature aye rules the roost. So with the ongoing of time, the forritsome folk, like the gleg quean, grew tired with standing on the flags or the earthen floor, and carried in little stools for themselves, which they took away again when the kirk had scaled. Then some inventive body brought in a wooden form one Sabbath day, and set it in a place of conveniency for his wife and bairns to sit on. The form was left in the kirk; others were carried in, and those who brought them soon acquired a prescriptive right to both the forms and the place. Still, there was no closing-in of these seats for many a year. So the congregation was made up of some who stood and some who sat, and the whole clanjamfrey of the parish worshipped together in this mixty-maxty style for a generation.

Then the wheelwright, whose form was near the door, put up a screen of boards and shutters to shield his wife and bairns, forby himself, from the draught in winter-time. The comfort of the thing was smittal, and one after another erected screens about their forms, until the whole area of the parish kirk was covered with shuttered seats.

By this time every family had grown into its own

right of sitting space, and it was an ill thing to move a man's form from the pulpit side after it had been standing there for a generation. Least of all would the laird thole his handsome form with the high screens to be moved. So, when a family left the parish for another place, the family form was given up to a favoured neighbour for a consideration, in lieu of the expense put out on the screening of it from draughts. So, bit by bit, the seat in the kirk became both a lettable and a vendible property.

But, at long last, there was an outcry for a something to bring this higglety-pigglety kind of sitting commode to an end. Then, indeed, there was many an argy-bargy about expense, and right, and old custom, when it came to the matter of reseating the kirk. The Heritors and Corporation of many an old burgh town adjudged it a hard thing that they should pay for the improving of what was plainly other folks' private property. Then that worthy man the Provost proposed that the Corporation should undertake the repair entirely, and that each proprietor should pay eighteenpence a body-room each year to the Town Council for the whole. This the lairds and the great folk were but too glad to do, and so be saved the expense of gutting and plenishing the whole kirk. From that time on, many a kirk that was a disgrace for dirt and disorder was seated after a proper plan—the laird choosing his own pew, and furnishing it with comfort according to the length of his own purse.

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So the laird's loft, as the private gallery of the chief heritor was soon called, became a regular feature of

every old eighteenth-century kirk, and the escutcheon of many a noble family hung over the gallery face, painted on a board, like Jacob's coat, in many colours.

It is not for me to tell of all the ongoings in the laird's loft when the bairns of my lady grew tired of sitting in the hard chairs down in front, or the servant-maids and flunkeys misbehaved in the common seats behind. But there was aye the little door at the back and the outside stair for them that misbehaved.

The old minister, with his black gown and white bands and his long-fingered black gloves, would bow to the laird's loft when he entered the plain wood pulpit, thus forgetting, I sorely misdoubt, that in the sanctuary all are one before a common Father. And I have heard with my own ears in olden days an aged minister make weekly supplication in the parish kirk by a lochside for "the family in authority in this district," while he kept a most circumspect eye during the service on the laird's loft, where my lady sat above the shield of arms.

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But that is all by now, and in our parish kirk restored it would be hard for a stranger to tell the laird's pew from the cadger's.

And as we leave the old kirk of Kilbarchan and walk down the quaint streets where the weavers can still be seen sitting in-by at their hand-looms making clinkamclank music on the hot afternoons, we give Habbie Simpson a look in the bygoing playing his pipes up yonder on the steeple at the cross; for with the passing of the laird's loft and the old families, the hand-loom weaver and the very twang of every habbie's tongue will soon be gone as well.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN
THE DAFT DAYS

CHAPTER XVIII THE DAFT DAYS

THE OLD SCOTS FOLK WERE NEVER SWEart to enjoy themselves, or to meddle with the mysticals of nature and human nature. The country fair, with its shows, its gaberlunzies, and its merry-go-rounds; the kirn at the farm in harvest-time, when every lad stepped it with his lass on the fine springy wooden floor of the granary, or in the barn, with its dour cold floor of clay; the rocking or fireside collogue on the moonlight nights of spring and winter, when friends gathered to enjoy the crack and the tale oft-told, while the women brought their "rocks" or distaffs with them, to spin the fine sheep wool—these were all occasions of joy for the men, women, and little bairns in the simple, frugal days of long ago.

But no longer are Scots bairns content with the candyman and his barrow-load of paper gauds and whirligigs, and his balloons of red and green and blue. For with the gowks, guisards, and galoshins has departed much of that ancient good cheer that was tinctured with the homely sentiments of old Scots country life.

The gowk came in with the April flourish. The cuckoo bird is the Scots gowk. And here we come on that strange combine of gloomy superstition and gaiety which was so common in olden times. Born and bred among the mountain mists and the lowland glens, our forebears saw a bogle in every gloaming bush and heard a kelpie cry in every waterfall. It was aye one part of things seen mixed with two parts of things mystical.

So the cuckoo came with its cheating, soft-like call, now here now there, in the dingle of the wood or up

the lone hillside, but seldom seen by any. The wandering voice matched our forebears' lust for mystery. To see the gowk in sleep was to dream of uncanny things. To be a gowkit body was to be a fool. A gowk's spittle was the frothy matter so often seen on plants. And a gowk's storm was the mysterious sudden onding of snow and bad weather at the beginning of April, when, in the midst of sunny days, none was expecting a winter storm.

So the cuckoo-time was a daft, cheating, uncanny time—the real beginning of the Daft Days in the year. The bairns, who have aye taken their cue from the old folks, caught up the ancient superstition and began to send each other on gowk's errands whenever April came in with the sound of the double-noted call in the woods. For there is an eerie attraction for most folk about something heard that cannot be seen. So the hunting of the gowk is one of the few old tricks of ancient times left to our bairnies yet.

Beltane came at midsummer, when the Baal fires were lit on every hill, and every man or maid who wished good fortune had to pass right through the fire. Fire was the mystic medium of worship with the ancient Scots Druids, and the four great fire festivals in the old Scots year were May Day, Midsummer, All-Hallows Eve, and Yule.

Many old Scots freits are connected with fire. When a man throws a lighted peat after a married woman, or a lover throws a blazing stick over his shoulder without looking at whom he aims, or the shepherds and young folks kindle the Beltane fire on the hill or the village street and dance in circles round the flames,

cooking their eggs and cakes afterwards on the red glowing ashes—how little they think of Baal and Ashtoreth and all the heathen rites from which these frolics sprang!

And at Hallowe'en, the night before All-Hallows Day, when the bairns carry about and swing their turnip lanterns with lighted candles inside, or throw their sweetheart nuts into the fire, to blaze together in love or explode in hate that separates, with squibs and lights and other village fires, the cry was always heard in olden days—

Hallowe'en, a nicht o' tine.

Tine or *teind* is the old Scots word for a spark of fire, and on this frolicsome eve—the nicht o' tine—it was fire everywhere—in the kitchen grate for the nuts, in the candles of the turnip lanterns, in the village street, on the neighbouring hill. It was the old Beltane fire of the Druid, the Baal-worshipper, the Ashtoreth grove.

And when the Guisards came into the kitchen at Hogmanay or Yule, to act their masks, how little they thought that they too were the last survivors of the ancient Mystery and Morality Players, who in olden times taught the simple country folk such sacred things as the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the stories of saints, and the love of Jesus Christ! They covered or masked their faces because of the holy things they acted. Even John Knox, that prince of siccar Scotsmen, was kind at first to the players. But by and by, when the players abused their solemn rights, the Guisards were banned by the Kirk as "contrair to the laws of God and the countrie."

But the Guisard has lived through it all. You may see him even yet, when country lads come in with blackened faces on Hogmanay to act the *Galoshin* play with droll performances of hand and voice. The *Galoshin* was the Guisard's great piece.

The first actor sings—

Hogmanay,
Trollolay,
Give us your white bread,
None of your grey.

Then *Galoshin* himself, the hero of the piece, comes forward with this noble cry—

In come I, Galoshin, Galoshin of renown;
A sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win my crown.

Now rushes forward *Bol Bendo*, claims the crown, slays the hero, and flourishes his wooden sword above the fallen Galoshin upon the kitchen floor.

Last of all steps forward *Doctor Beelzebub*, and, after blethering out some charms, raises the fallen Galoshin with a pinch of snuff!

Then all the actors sing together—

The night it is called Hogmanay,
We wish you all good cheer,
With as many guineas in the house
As days are in the year.
And bless the master of the house,
The mistress bless also,
And all the bonny bairnies
That round the table go.

The Guisards that came into the kitchen in the old days never went away without receiving something from the master and the mistress to help their yule-tide festival.

But alas! the Daft Days of gowks and guisards are

gone. They will soon be forgotten altogether. But their droll ongoings, which meant nothing but play to the young folks and memories to the old, had their roots struck deep and firm in that mysterious pagan period of our ancient Scots life which was the borderland betwixt heathendom and faith.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

AN OLD COACHING INN

CHAPTER XIX OLD COACHING INN

"Riftam tiftam, try my porter,
'Twill make your road a great deal shorter;
And if you chance to return this way,
You'll find here plenty of corn and hay."

IT STANDS TO-DAY, ON THE GREAT LONdon road, beaking in the sun, with its step gables and many chimneys, its ekes and its entry, its red-tiled roofs and range of stables—the old coaching inn of Fairshiels. No longer do the post-boys wind their horns at the door, or the many-coated drivers of the "Flying Scotsman" or the "Royal Mail" gather up the reins of their teams and make a brave show as they start out in summer sunshine or winter snows. The coaching days and the old ways are all gone, and a solitary hen walks across the grass-grown courtyard to-day in the sun, croaking and scratching between the cobblestones for one seed of the farmer's grain.

But this same old inn of Fairshiels has known great days. Being the first stage from Edinburgh on the east road to London town, many a famous man has paid the lawing to the host after a royal night in the great parlour and a sound sleep between the lavender-scented sheets.

There is a sough of Queen Mary about the whole countryside, with Borthwick Castle just over the hill yonder, and Cakemuir Castle with its Queen Mary room in the keep hard by. Prince Charlie himself passed up the road, after his brave but tarry-fingered highlanders had stolen cream and honey, down by at Ford, to make Atholl brose. King James hunted over the moor, but a step or two from the inn, where there still stands the gable end of the royal hunting box

which we call now The Luggie. And it is a hard thing for a Scotsman to believe that any of the dram-drinking Stuarts could give the old coaching inn at Fairshiels the go-by without passing the time of day with mine host.

In olden times, when men and maids were hastier in love than they are now, many a young couple arrived at Fairshiels inn and clamoured for blacksmith or host to tie the knot.

It was on a dull, quiet November day—the nineteenth of the month—of the year 1772, that a coach-and-four swept over Soutra Hill and came thundering down the road to the inn door. With a shout for the ostler, a fair young man of twenty-one, dressed in a claret-coloured coat with ruffles at neck and wrists, thrust out his head at the coach window and called for James Fairbairn the innkeeper.

"How far are we, landlord, from the royal town of Edinburgh?"

"Fifteen miles, sir, if you please."

"Ha! Bessie, my love," said he, looking round at a pretty girl who was listening to every word in the dark interior of the coach, "it is too far to risk it. Let us get out here and send for a parson to weld the golden chain, my dear, for I've heard that at Fairshiels they have tied some bonny knots ere this."

"Certainly, my lord—we have a guid repute for making young folks happy here!" chimed in the wily landlord, with a wink.

And with that the young lady got out.

He was plain John Scott in those days, but he was already an Oxford scholar, and had been born in Love

Lane, Newcastle—surely a right appropriate place for one whose heart was hot with romance. And she, the beautiful Elizabeth Surtees, at John Scott's bidding and with her own heart in the great ploy, had escaped by a ladder from her father's house in England, and made off across the Border in a coach-and-four with her lover, young John Scott of University College, Oxford. Twenty-one and eighteen, youth and beauty, with nothing but true love and a dooms empty purse between them—they laughed at to-morrow, and galloped up with a laugh to Fairshiels inn that day.

"Jack Scott," said a friend on hearing it, "has run off with Bessie Surtees, and the poor lad is undone."

No fear of that. For after James Fairbairn, the landlord of the inn at Fairshiels, had sent for the parson at Haddington, because the parish minister bogled at the job, John Scott and Elizabeth Surtees were married in the inn parlour, James and William Fairbairn, the innkeeper and the smith, being the witnesses and signing the certificate. Then, returning quietly to Oxford, they lived for a year on his scholar's pay.

They were, from the first, a well-matched, happy pair; but after a year at tutoring, John Scott took to the Law. From one step of the ladder to another the lad climbed up, until, as Solicitor-General, Attorney-General, Chief Justice, and last of all Lord Chancellor, the world knew him as Lord Eldon with the pretty wife Lady Bess.

He had found it hard enough to pay for the hired coach-and-four when he galloped off at twenty-one with his bonny bride. But when he died, an old man of eighty-seven, he left behind him half a million

pounds; and the folk said that his lifelong devotion to Bessie was the most beautiful thing in his siccar life.

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Fairshiels was a thrang place in those days, and no mistake. For scarcely had Jack Scott and his bride left, on the 20th of November, when Samuel Johnson and James Boswell arrived from Sir John Dalrymple's castle of Oxenford on the 23rd!

The great lumbering man rolled in at the inn door, with a laugh to Boswell about Lady Hungry's seven-year-old sheep and the spoiled dinner.

And that Sabbath night, when Samuel Johnson called for his thirteenth cup of tea, the landlord slyly remarked, "So ye have been to sup with Lady Bess doon by?"

"Why, yes—we had that honour. But, do you know her ladyship?"

"Eh, sirs! Surely we a' ken Lady Bess hereaboots—for she was oor ain auld Laird's only bairn, and she made a run-away match wi' Sir John mony years syne."

"Do you have many irregular Scots weddings here, then?" asked the great man, with a touch of sarcasm in his voice.

"Ay—but they are maistly English bodies," replied James Fairbairn, with a look out of the corner of one eye at Samuel Johnson. "We had one but three or four days syne in this very parlour—John Scott, an Oxford scholar, and a bonny bit English lass called Elizabeth Surtees."

"Is it possible?" cried Johnson. "I know Jack Scott very well!"

So after drinking a fourteenth cup of tea that Sunday night he went to bed. But Boswell remained in the parlour writing in his portfolio, and James Fairbairn brought him something in a greybeard that was not tea.

On the Monday morning, Johnson left Scotland in the Royal Mail coach, and never again returned to the country or people that he could not understand. And the Monday following he went down to Oxford and drank a dish of tea—or was it more?—with young John Scott and his wife, and held a close collogue with them about Fairshiels inn and irregular Scots weddings.

. . . . . .

The very last to put up an old family coach, with a dickey and rumble, at Fairshiels inn, was another of the Scott clan—Lady John Scott of Spottiswood, in the parish of Westruther. The slight, jimp girl, who had inherited the fair curly hair and the heavy-lidded blue eyes of the Wauchopes of Niddry from her mother, married Lord John Scott, the only brother of the Duke of Buccleuch. Guid gear gangs in wee buik, and this denty Scots gentlewoman was full of music and poetry and that sough of old romance which gars the thought of ancient times and things bring tears to the eyes in the sunset or the gloaming. It was this same Lady John who wrote the song of "Bonnie Annie Laurie," and put a tune to it out of her own romantic soul, as she sat with her fingers drawing music from the strings of her harp.

She was a stout Jacobite, hated English ways, and would not travel in a railway train. Many a time she

stood in a dwam of delight at Spottiswood, watching the London coaches rolling up and down the Great North Road two miles away—but that was before the present woods were planted. From her wedding day till her burial she was always out in the shine or storm of her beloved Lammermoors. For her bridal trip was a drive from Spottiswood to Bowhill on the afternoon of 16th March 1836, and the coach ran into a drift of snow. When her last song had been sung, and they carried her shoulder-high to the Auld Kirk of Westruther, on the sixty-fourth anniversary of her wedding day, the little black procession was caught in a blinding snowstorm. It was what she would have liked best of all, for she once said to her grandniece at Spottiswood, "Heaven won't seem heaven if I don't see those benty fields and tufts of rushes there!" The wind of the Lammermoors was the breath of her soul.

But she was old and done when she crossed Soutra for the last time, and put up her antique family coach at Fairshiels inn for a change of horses. There are those living this very day who heard the clatter of her horses on the cobbles of the yard, and saw my Lady John set out again for the palace of the Duke at Dalkeith; and yet she herself had spoken to those who had often held converse with Prince Charlie. So much good Scots history had passed before the blue eyes of this auld-farrant gentlewoman!

And as we look at the old deserted inn to-day, beaking in the lown, we seem to see a little old lady with peach-bloom cheeks, dressed in a scarlet shawl and wearing doeskin gloves with Vandyke gauntlets, walking up and down the pleasaunces at Spottiswood.

We hear, too, the thin, quavering voice singing this "Song of Durrisdeer," which she wrote so long ago in the old kirkyard where her lover-lord was buried—and both voice and song are set most sweetly to the tinkle of the harp which she loved all her life—

"We'll meet nae mair at sunset, when the weary day is dune,
Nor wander hame thegither, by the lee-licht o' the mune!
I'll hear your step nae longer amang the dewy corn,
For we'll meet nae mair, my bonniest, either at eve or morn.

The yellow broom is waving abune the sunny brae,
And the rowan berries dancing where the sparkling waters play.
Tho' a' is bright and bonny, it's an eerie place to me,
For we'll meet nae mair, my dearest, either by burn or tree.

Far up into the wild hills, there's a kirkyard auld and still,
Where the frosts lie ilka morning, and the mists hang low and chill,
And there ye sleep in silence, while I wander here my lane,
Till we meet ance mair in heaven, never to part again."

CHAPTER TWENTY
THE GREY MOTHER

SHE STANDS TO-DAY, FULL OF MYSTICAL beauties within and crowned with a perfect grace without, looking down on the crowds that throng the best-known causey in Scotland. The storms of centuries, over-sweeping her plain Scots face, have invested it with a douce grey dignity that is now her rarest charm, and to us in whose veins flows the blood of the Covenant, she will for ever be our own Grey Mother—this Kirk of St. Giles in the Royal Town of Edinburgh.

In these hinmost days of ecclesiastical strife, when blue banners have been laid aside for blue books, and the weapons of our warfare are no longer whingers and broadswords but speeches and Committee Reports, it may very well be that the scrupulous ecclesiastic is blind to what the wayfaring man can plainly see in this old Grey House of God. Like the King's daughter, she is all glorious within, with long, resounding aisles, plaintive soughs of music that rise and fall like " Martyrs " of the minor key, sunlight streaming through the painted windows and laying the floors in crimson and gold, while the high vaulted roofs look down on many a tattered regimental banner hanging in motionless glory round the great stone pillars.

The Grey Mother has a forgiving heart. For, here are the tombs of brave Scots men who fought dourly on different sides, for conscience' sake, throughout their little day of life. They now sleep calm and peaceful, side by side, like sturdy bairns who have bickered at their play and then lain down in the twilight full of weariness, in the same bed, with the tears all dried on their faces. Can any man with the sentiment of the Kirk in his soul walk round St. Giles without thanking

God for that Good Knight Gospeller, who made it the pride of his life to transform this ancient sanctuary into a shrine for the visible union of every Scots Christian's faith?

See how we have resolved the doubts and differences of many generations here, in that spirit of leal affection which bids us hope that even now the bairns who have been so long estranged are weary of their bickers and are hankering after the Grey Mother's knee!

There, within a few feet of John Knox's grave, sleeps James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, that doughtiest of all Scots soldiers, who signed the Covenant in Greyfriars with the rest of them, and afterwards, for Royal scruples, fought against the Solemn League. The sworn enemy of Argyle, he lost his head one May-day morn in 1650, near the Market Cross outby, and ten years later his poor remains were carried in here to find a resting-place. And over yonder, just across the Kirk, sleeps that same Archibald Campbell, Marquis of Argyle. Years before, he had watched from a balcony his foeman Montrose being trundled up the Canongate to the scaffold. Then, he himself, on another May-day morn of 1661, suffered execution on the very same spot, and had his head transfixed on the very same spike which had been for so long adorned with the head of Montrose! Now—most strange and significant sights—we have raised their monuments without prejudice, the one fornent the other, in this old dim Kirk, where a later race of Presbyters can sing their psalms and give God thanks for them both.

But there are stranger signs of forgiving and forgetting in the heart of the Grey Mother than that. Yon

little niche, high up in the dark, was once the doorway of a narrow room, where Sir John Gordon of Haddo was confined until his execution, just three years after Argyle was slain, and in this same Haddo's Hole the Covenanting prisoners from Rullion Green were penned like sheep awaiting the slaughter. One or two steps farther west, and you come upon a great and worthy statue of John Knox, standing in a corner, with open book, not far from the spot where the Tolbooth Kirk in St. Giles was located. Here, Mary Queen of Scots, with those glamorous eyes that so often shone with love and glittered with tears, opened her first parliament, and here John Knox, who could thole neither her loves nor her tears, thundered his last great sermon down the nave. Mary and Knox, Argyle and Montrose, how far we have travelled towards a union of our siccar Scots faith when we sing a psalm here in the presence of such memorials!

And as we sit and listen, the sound of the Grey Mother's voice comes to us down these aisles in many differing accents.

We hear the solemn intoning of Dean Hanna, as he fumbles nervously with the pages of his prayer-book. Then a woman's shrill voice protests over yonder near the side chapel, and the little folding-stool of Jenny Geddes flies straight for the Dean's head, to fall with an ugly clatter on the flags. After that—riot, revolution, and the bishops are deposed.

Listen again, and you will hear the tramp, tramp of soldiers and the clinking of spurred heels on the stone passages. It is Cromwell's troops marching out by the Holy Table yonder. For, with his strong, determined

sense, the Great Protector was not over-fashious about quartering his men in the East Kirk of St. Giles.

Listen again! and you will hear the voices of many great men preaching from the pulpit in many different ways. Their memorial brasses are all about us on the pillars. Alexander Henderson,—strong, clear-thinking, resolute, the most statesmanlike of all the ministers of the Kirk, who, with Johnston of Warriston, drew up the National Covenant, and presided at the great Glasgow Assembly in St. Mungo's Kirk by the limpid molendinar burn. Robert Leighton—presbyter first and archbishop afterwards, mystical and misunderstood in his vain desire to make a union out of both Kirks, and so reconcile the black Geneva gown with the bishop's white lawn. William Carstares—incomparable in his subtlety as a suffering minister of God, and a polished courtier of the King. One after the other, we hear them preaching in this grand old Kirk—the Presbyterian statesman, the Episcopalian bishop, the patriotic ecclesiastic, with many another whose name to-day is in the history books. But ever recurring, again and again, above all other voices that were ever lifted up in righteous protest within these walls, like the persistent theme in a fugue, thunders the voice of the one man who was greater than them all—John Knox.

How generously the Grey Mother has nursed the many Kirks that she has held in her arms! After the Reformation, forty-four altars were smashed to pieces here, and nearly one hundred officiating priests were dismissed. You can almost hear the shuffling of their feet as they hurry out from the Sanctuary, to the sound

of the hammers which destroy one piece of popery after another. Then the building is divided up into four separate Kirks. Part is even used as a prison. Shops are plastered round the outer walls. Later still, a ruthless restoration destroys many of the external graces of the old Cathedral by covering its outside walls with a bald, commonplace casing of stone. But now, after many travails and dividing sorrows, the old Grey Mother is at rest again. The many churches have become one, and the tranquil beauty of old age has mellowed her anxious face.

For still she stands on the crown of the causey and waits for another union of her sundered children's hearts. She sees them ettling after a closer bond. She hears them calling to one another in their own cautious Scots way. She is weary of their strife and anxious lest they taigle over long. Will the Grey Mother wait in vain?

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE
THE HINMOST SLEEP

CHAPTER XXI THE HINMOST SLEEP

"Carry me over the long last mile,
Man of Nazareth, Christ for me!"

AMONG THE UPLANDS AND THE HILLS men, women, and bairns are well accustomed to the long road and the steep brae. There are, I suppose, many walking the streets this day who have never walked a score of miles on a stretch of country road from one end of life to another,—kirk, doctor, and counting-house are but a stone's-throw from their doors,—and if a man can win at religion, health, and daily work by the short road, he seldom seeks the long way round.

But at Fairshiels, most things worth winning are at a distance. In sickness or in health we have to go far for help. Yet the country way has its own blessing; for those who walk farthest in life keep farthest from death, and all up and down the Lammermoors you will find hale old folk with the cheeriest of faces, in which are set a pair of far-away, old-time eyes. So it has become a custom among us to speak of life itself as the Long Road.

But the longest road must have an end, and it is one of the uncos of life that we can never bid good-bye without a pang. Still and on, we can say that there is more beauty about the Last Mile to countryfolk now than there was in the stern old days. We have learned a cleaner way of life, which makes us look with a less fearful eye on death—and all this comes from an ever-growing knowledge of the good God's love.

In every country kirkyard you will find the history of the parish written on tables of stone. In Fairshiels there are two volumes to the local history book—for

there is an old kirkyard and a new. The old God's acre stands high on the rising ground above the village, encircled by ancient trees—the new one lies at the foot of the moor road, bielded by a belt of pines.

Here our countryfolk sleep sound at last, and here in midsummer heat or winter cold we lay our beloved to rest. The time was when stern Scots folk kept up their strifes in death as they had done in life—when little innocent bairns, who had come into the world unwelcomed, were sent away unbaptized and unnamed to a corner in the kirkyard of their own, without a blessing from priest or pastor. And those who, with rash hand, had drawn aside the curtain that divides this world from the next were kept outside the hallowed ground altogether. The self-destroyed were always buried where three lairds' lands met, and I am thinking now of an island in the west where a ruined kirkyard stands on a cliff with nothing but wee green howes in it where the unbaptized bairns and the disowned were buried by themselves in an unholy exile, with only one long grave in their midst, old Cairstine's, the blind witch. But of them and her we may hear again.

Now the kirkyard in Scotland is all one God's Acre. When it comes to the end of things, we lay aside all differences of creed and rank, reputation and age, fortune or failure, and take our places side by side on the hill among the howes, well pleased to leave the weighing of life to the Great Father who makes no errors of judgment, and who claims us all for His own bairns. So in Fairshiels I have seen a Roman priest standing in the deep snow of a dreary winter day to robe himself and his two little acolytes in white skirts

with lace frills, while both Papist and Presbyter stood reverently side by side to hear the strange words and see the stranger sprinkling of the holy water with which a poor man's soul was committed to God. But mostly we commit our dead with simpler ceremony to their last resting-place, and those are wisest who can make up all their bickers before they fall on sleep.

. . . . . .

It was a rare quiet day of early spring when we carried Adam Allison over the Last Mile. He went away, as he had lived, modestly, with his house all in order, and without a complaint. The sun shone out of a clear blue sky upon the grey-green world as the men gathered in the roadway about the garden gate down in the sleepy hollow where the old man had come to spend his last days. They were all there, from the Laird to the labourer. It is our way of showing sympathy in country places. We are known to one another all through life. So we gather with one accord to bid each other good-bye when it comes to the hinder end.

The little cottage with the fir trees rising behind it, and the garden stretching up to the road in front, and the burn whimpling between the house and the meadow, was invested with a strange dignity as the minister passed down the walk to the door. The still air seemed to be instinct with the sense of a presence that was lingering somewhere close by, unseen. The garden he had tended so faithfully cried out in mute appeal for the hand that would tend it no more. A spade stood at the end of an unfinished trench, giving startling testimony to the labourer's sudden interruption in his task. The well-trimmed hedge, whose cuttings

lay still ungathered; the half-empty box of seed potatoes lying waiting to be planted beside their fellows; the little heap of chopped wood; the carefully raked gravel walk—everything that the eye rested upon seemed to whisper, "He is not dead, but sleepeth."

For a whole generation Adam Allison had sat in the corner pew by the east door in Fairshiels kirk. It was he who kept the quaint sheepskin-covered book whose ancient yellow pages told the tale of the contributions of Christ's folk among the hills. It was he who with careful hand had prepared the bread and poured out the wine in the old pewter cups for the Sacrament of the Lord. It was he who reverently laid the snow-white cloth on the holy table, pinning it round at the ends with fastidious hand in his own particular way. Silent, reserved, devout—this Clerk of Christ had served his fellows with an antique courtesy, and his kirk with steadfast loyalty. He had seen one minister after another come and go, and now he was following them himself, at God's bidding, when all was done.

Within the cottage the silence is only broken by the sound of the minister's voice repeating those words of everlasting consolation which have taken the edge from sorrow for many a bereaved heart; and in a new burst of living sunlight the slow procession begins to ascend the steep, winding brae which leads from Sleepy Hollow to Fairshiels.

How the old-time memories are recalled by this one and that as we climb the Last Mile! How often the school bairns run up this very brae with lightsome steps of play; how bravely strong men are breasting

it with heavy loads on their backs every day; and how steep and forbidding it becomes to those who are past the allotted span of years! Until, one day, our nearest of kin have to carry us over its brow, and lay us to rest beside our own kith in the green kirkyard.

Some wondered at the last resting-place of old Adam Allison when they saw the open grave—not beside his own folk, but hard by the family vault of a well-known merchant in the city. But the minister knew why the old man was laid there.

"Lay me," he had said, "beside my old friend and master, with whom I have trafficked these forty years. I have found him a' that he should be in life, and I would like to be close beside him in death."

This was his last sentiment.

And in these present days, when the world seems to be for ever wrangling over the enmities of master and servant, it is good to stand here in the spring sunshine and see the living sentiment of a servant's love immortalised beyond the grave. For to be sib in life to those we love is to be sib in death for evermore.

When the last words of committal and prayer have been said, and we turn away from the green hill towards our village homes, it is with an inexpressible regret in our hearts for the breaking of the last of those living links which bind us to the past, and a thankful prayer to Him who will continue to lead our bairns' bairns by the green pastures and the still waters after we too have been carried over the Last Mile.

Oh the old days, and the old ways,
And the world as it used to be!
How the heart goes out in longing
For the days we shall never see!

For friends grow old, and heads grow grey,
And time flies fast;
But all the love in the world, dear,
Will never bring back the past.

Oh the steep brae, and the long brae,
The brae we used never to see!
Youth ran to the top with laughter,
And breasted it easily.
But age creeps slow, with back bent low,
And level roads are best
For the feet that refuse to climb, dear,
When the sun goes down in the west.

But the old days, and the old ways
Are the life of the days to come,
And the lost will be found again, dear,
When we all win home.
So, let friends grow old and leave us,
And let time fly never so fast,
The love that is better than life, dear,
Will rob us of nothing at last.

GLOSSARY

Ail = to be sick.
Aiss = ash.
Argy-bargy = to dispute.
Auld-farrant = shrewd, sagacious.

Beak, beek = to bask in the heat.
Beak in the lown = to bask in the sun in a sheltered place.
Bein, bien = well-to-do, comfortable (French: *bien*).
Bent = coarse hill grass.
Bicker = a quarrel.
Bide = to dwell.
Birl = to throw with a whirl, to spin round.
Blate = shy.
Blether = to talk nonsense.
Bogle = a spectre, portent.
Breenge = to burst roughly in.
Buirdly = large and well-to-do.

Caller = fresh.
Card = to tease wool by hand between two brushes or "cards" with mettle heckles.
Ceilidh = fireside story-telling.
Chesting = the act of putting a corpse into a coffin or "chest."
Clanjamfrey = a term used for the whole crowd, the mob.
Clattering = prattling, babbling. Used of the sound of horses' hoofs making a sharp noise on a road or causeway.
Clinched = gripped, brought to a definite conclusion.
Cockerel = a young cock.
Coggie = a small wooden bowl.
Collogue = intimate conversation, private conference (French: *colloque*).
Cosh = neat, comfortable, snug.

Denty = neat.
Dicky = the box seat of a coach.
Dirl = a vibrating stroke, used in the emotional sense as a thrill.
Disjaskit = cast down, despairing.
Dool = grief (French: *deuil*).
Dooms = very, absolutely.
Douce = sedate, sober (French: *doux*).
Dour = hard, obstinate, bold, intrepid (French: *dur*).
Dovering = half asleep, snoozing.
Dredgy = the mourning feast after returning from a funeral (Latin: *dirige*).
Dreeing out = enduring to the bitter end.
Dunt = a rude blow.
Dwam = a swoon, an absorbing dream.

Earock=a young hen of the first year.
Eident=diligent.
Ekes=additions.
Ettling=aiming at, striving hard after.

Far-ben=deep, a long way in; reticent.
Fashious=troublesome (French: *Facheux*; *facheuse*).
Fell=very, denoting degree.
Foregang=a presentiment.
Forenight=early evening, between twilight and bedtime.
Forfochan=utterly fatigued.
Fornent=opposite to.
Forritsome=forward in disposition.
Freit=a superstitious notion.
Fresh=a thaw, the breaking up of frost.
Friar's Nose—Freer's Nose=Friars' Knowes—a shepherd's cottage at the head of Kelphope water, under Lammerlaw. Probably a well-known haunt of the Black Friar Monks, who lived in a famous monastery, a few miles off, on Soutra Hill.

Gaberlunzie=a wallet that hangs on the loins (French: *gabare*; *longe*).
Gaberlunzie-man=a travelling beggar, a man who carries a bag to collect alms.
Galoshin=one of the characters in the Guizard's well-known play of "Galoshin."
Gangrel=a vagrant.
Garred=caused, forced.
Gear=goods, stuff.
Gift, the=second sight.
Girn=to snarl, fret, complain.
Girnel=granary.
Gleg=quick in perception.
Gowk=the cuckoo; a fool.
Gowpen=as much as can be lifted with both hands placed together.
Greybeard=an earthen bottle.
Grippy=close-fisted, tenacious, grasping.
Guizard=a masker, play-actor (French: *Guise*).

Haggle=to make trouble over.
Hamebiders=stay-at-homes, clannish characters, those who are partial to their own.
Hantle=a considerable number.
Hinmost=the last.
How, howe=a mound of earth.
Howff=a favourite haunt.

Inby=the inside of a house.

Jimp=slender.

Kain = a duty paid by a tenant to his landlord in *Kind*—such as *Kain-hens*, *Kain-cheese* (Gaelic: *Ceann* = a head).
Kelpie = a water-spirit.
Kenned = knew.
Kenspeckle = very conspicuous.
Kirn = harvest home.
Kith = acquaintance.

Lave = the remainder.
Lawing = the legal charge at an inn.
Leal = loyal, true, honest.
Lippen = to trust, depend on.
Loth = unwilling.
Lown = serene, sheltered, referring to the tranquillity of the air.

Magerful = domineering.
Mailing = a farm, or small property, so called because *mail* or rent was paid for it.
Mealock = a grain; cf. *pickle*.
Mischancy = unlucky.

Namely = famous.
Neive, nieve, neave = a fist.
Norie = a whim, notion, maggot.

Oe, oye = a grandson.
Onding = a sudden blast of rain or snow.
Ooks = weeks.
Outby = outside the house.
Outed = expelled.

Pawkie = sly.
Pech = to pant, breathe hard on a hill.
Pernickety = over precise in trifles.
Pickle = a small quantity, a grain of corn; cf. *mealock*.
Ploy = a frolic, an absorbing hobby.

Quean = a young woman.

Rake, rakeful = as much as a person can carry in a cart from one place to another.
Red, rede = to counsel.
Rickle = a ruin, a heap of stones (French: *recueil*).
Routh = plenty.
Rumble = a seat for servants behind a carriage or coach.

Scaled = emptied, dispersed.
Seep = to soak through and through.

Set = to lease or let a property.
Shilpit = sickly, poorly developed.
Sib = related by blood.
Siccar = sure, secure.
Sklent = to slant; used of sunlight falling obliquely.
Smashery = sound of breaking.
Smittal = infectious.
Smoored = used of powdery snow drifting up and over a window or door.
Snell = keen, sharp.
Sough = a sound, a whisper as of wind moaning gently round a house.
Spae = to tell a fortune.
Spatey = liable to floods.
Speir = to ask.
Sweart = reluctant, unwilling.
Swither = to hesitate.

Tack = the lease, by which a property is let or "set" to another.
Taigle = to tarry, delay, put off time.
Tent = to take heed, mark.
Thole = to bear, suffer, put up with.
Thrang = busy.
Threep = to insist violently.
Tine = a spark of fire.
Troke = a small bit of business; when used as a verb—to be busy about very little.

Unco = anything strange or prodigious (noun); very (adv.)

Waulk = to full cloth.
Whinger = a short knife used at meals, which can also be used as a sword in broils.

Scottish Rivers.

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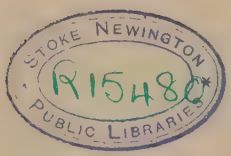

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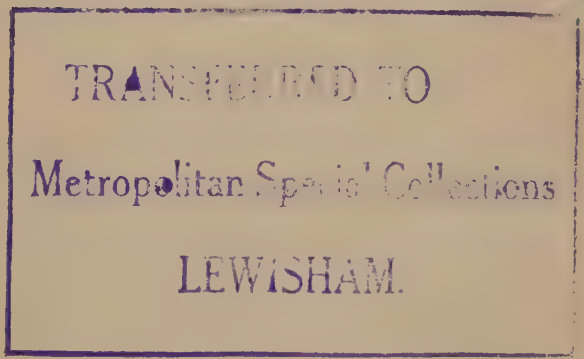

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EDITORIAL PREFACE.

THE remarkable and most interesting author of this volume, Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, is so well known in the field of Scottish literature, that to give a few details regarding the man and his books is more a matter of form than of requirement.

The eldest son of Sir Andrew Lauder of Fountainhall, Bart., and born in 1784, Sir Thomas began public life at a comparatively early age, by joining the army. But after his marriage with Miss Cumin, only child and heiress of George Cumin, Esq. of Relugas, he retired from the army and lived on that beautiful spot on the banks of the Findhorn. In character and appearance, Sir Thomas was much beloved and admired by a wide circle of friends as well as by the general public. Of noble presence, with a handsome countenance, animated by an honest, happy expression, he was one of the most popular of men. Of the kindliest disposition, he was always ready to place himself in the van in any cause where the liberty and the welfare of his countrymen were concerned. He moreover was a most highly talented artist, and an ardent Scottish patriot; all his writings and sketches dealing as they do with Scottish incident, history, scenery, and character. In 1820, he succeeded to the Baronetcy, and ten years later he began to live a good deal at the Grange, near Edinburgh.

From an early period, and throughout his life, he seemed to have great facility and pleasure in literary composition, especially if relating in some way to his native land. His first literary production was a paper read before the Royal Society on the *Parallel Roads of*

Glen Roy. He was also a voluminous contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine* on a variety of subjects. In fiction, the most noteworthy of his productions was the splendid historical romance entitled *The Wolfe of Badenoch.* This tale created an immense amount of interest, and was eagerly read. The work being at first published anonymously, it was on many hands accredited to Sir Walter Scott; and by many is still reckoned as equal in merit to most of the productions of that distinguished author. This romance has been reprinted repeatedly. Another romance, entitled *Lochandhu*, came from his pen, and was much read. It is not quite so historical in scope, but is equally interesting in other respects, and is exceedingly rich in local incident and character. Of the same character as the two preceding works are *Tales of the Highlands* and *Highland Legends.* These two latter works are richly descriptive of historical incident in the Highlands in the form of tales, and are extremely interesting.

Another work which came from Sir Thomas's pen, and which perhaps may be regarded as the most unique of his writings, is *The Moray Floods in* 1829. He was an eye-witness of that extraordinary and terrible catastrophe, and made original drawings of what he saw. So that he depicted these strange scenes both by his pen as well as by his pencil. And in describing to the life what he saw, nothing seemed to be lost to his keen sense of observation, whether relating to the terrible or the comic. In so vividly depicting in this book both circumstance and individuality, the author to no small extent pourtrays his own beautiful and many-sided character, with regard to sympathy for suffering, his humour, and his sense of the picturesque. The book excited immense interest, and attracted much notice and sympathy to the catastrophe which otherwise might not have been felt.

Although so highly interested in the history, romance, and literature of his country, Sir Thomas was also thoroughly practical in matters calculated to be of service to his fellow-creatures. And as Secretary to the Board of Manufactures and Fisheries, which post he filled from 1829 until his decease, he found much scope for usefulness; and where his advanced scientific and wide general knowledge, as well as finely cultured taste, were of great service in furthering the useful arts in Scotland. It was in the capacity of Secretary to the Board, and in order to obtain practical information, that the famous voyage round the coasts of Scotland was undertaken. Along with him went James Wilson, brother of the renowned Christopher North. They sailed round the north and west of Scotland in 1842, making careful inquiry into the industrial and social condition of the, at that time, much neglected people of the coasts and islands. The account of the voyage is published in a book of two volumes, and is entitled *A Voyage Round the Coasts of Scotland and the Isles.* It contains numerous extremely interesting etchings by Sir Thomas; the letter-press, however, is by Mr. Wilson. For a variety of reasons, the book is still much prized.

In one very large volume, Sir Thomas also wrote a full account of the Queen's visit to the north in 1842. He also edited several useful and artistic works. Sir Thomas's whole literary life suggests intense activity, warm patriotic enthusiasm, and a strong desire to benefit his fellow-countrymen morally, intellectually, and socially. Indeed, in every respect, such a man appears among us much too seldom. The present work on the rivers of Scotland, originally published in *Tait's Magazine*, was the last that came from his pen; and was, in part, written to his dictation by his daughter Susan, who inherited her father's

enthusiasm and benevolence, and worked lovingly at that which helped to cheer her father's hours of suffering. Sir Thomas died in 1848, at the comparatively early age of 64, beloved and honoured by all. In his day he possessed the friendship of all the best spirits of his time, such as Scott, Jeffrey, Cockburn, Wilson, Williams, Thomson, etc., etc.

Thomas Constable, in his life of his father, gives a pleasant glimpse of Sir Thomas and his character, such, perhaps, as no one else had the means of giving. He says:—"Sir Thomas Dick Lauder was an eminently liberal man, and often obeyed the impulses of humanity without due reference to maxims of political economy, or perhaps to the dictates of common prudence. I well remember, on more than one occasion, after breakfasting at Grange House—that home of love and happiness—when leaving it along with him to return to town, the *tribe* of suitors—chiefly female—that beset him in the Lovers' Lane, and to each of them he seemed to give a daily dole from the heavy pocket which he was not long in lightening. On my venturing to remonstrate, he said, 'I only give them pence; if they walk so far for so small a sum, they *must* be needy.'

"Another practice of Sir Thomas's may, however, be earnestly recommended for imitation. He cut out for himself, and put together in sequence, all the recorded utterances of our Lord, and kept them open in his dressing-room, that he might read a portion every morning as he dressed. I remember his recommendation of this habit to myself, saying, 'For a busy man like me, occupied all day in worldly matters, I find it very valuable.'"

How pleasant it is to get such side lights into the character and habits of so great and able a man.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. PAGE

I.—THE JORDAN, ... 13

Scottish and Irish Rivers—The Jordan—Its Source in Craighouse Hill—The Ruins and the View—Incidents in the Life of Sir Thomas Dick—Course past Morningside Asylum—Blackford Hill.

II.—THE JORDAN (*Continued*), ... 28

Borough Moor—James IV. and Flodden Field—The Old Mansion House of Blackford—The Ancient Grange of St. Giles—Duddingston Loch in Former Times—Prestonfield and its Associations—Craigmillar Castle—The Burn of Braid—Its Course and Associations.

III.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES, . . 44

The Valley of the Tweed—The Great Change from Former Times—The Dogs of the District—The Old Strongholds—The River's Source—The Beef Stand—A Highlander's Adventure—Reminiscences of Olden Times—Covenanting Times—The Frasers of Lovat—The Crook Inn—Thane's Castle—Merlin the Wizard—Biggar Water and the Skirling.

IV.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 60

General Description of the River down to Drumelzier—The Dalwick Family and Estate—The Rivers Lyne and Tairth—Castle Craig—Drochil Castle and the Mortouns—The Sheriff's Muir—Manor Water, a fine Angling Stream—Its Historical Associations—The History of the Black Dwarf.

V.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 74

Neidpath Castle and Surroundings—Romantic Aspects of the River—Old Q.—The Frasers—The Town of Peebles—The Murrays of Blackbarony—Peebles in Olden Times—A Romantic Legend—Hayston, Horsburgh, Glen Ormiston and Cardrona—The Leithen, a Trouting Stream—The Village of Innerleithen—The Quair—The Ancient House of Traquair.

VI.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 88

Pennecuick on Traquair—Elibank Tower—The Murrays and the Scotts—Sir Walter Scott at Ashiestiel—Salmon Fishing—Cadon Water—The Mansions of Yair and Fernielea—The Ettrick and the Yarrow—Thirlestane Tower—An Old Legend—Tushieland Tower.

CHAP. PAGE

VII.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 103

The Ettrick at Newhouse—St. Mary's Loch as an Angling Resort—Old Towers and Chapels—Cockburne of Henderland—His Wife's "Lament"—The Flower of Yarrow—Douglass Water—The Douglass Tragedy—Altrive—Old Legends.

VIII.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 115

The Tower of Hangingshaw—The Knight and James V.—Newark Castle—The Birthplace of Mungo Park—The Battlefield of Philiphaugh—The Ettrick at Selkirk.

IX.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 121

Abbotsford—Historical Incidents and Associations—Gala Water—Angling Reminiscences—Great Changes along the Banks—"The Old Village of Galashiels"—Its Recent Increase of Industry—An Old Legend.

X.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 137

The Allan—Hillslap, Colmslie, and Langshaw—The Hospice of Solra—The George—David Kyle—Roman Camps—Melrose Abbey—Its Historical Associations—The Builders.

XI.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 146

The Leader Water—Account of the Lauder Family—The Earls of Lauderdale and Thirlestane Castle—The Leader a good Angling River—Thomas the Rhymer—His Strange History—"The Broom of Cowdenknowes"—The Last of the Fishers—The Tods of Drygrange.

XII.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 161

St. Boswell's—Hunting Reminiscences—The Haigs of Bemerside—Dryburgh Abbey—Angling Incidents—Rob of Trows—Fleurs Palace—The Teviot.

XIII.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 169

The Teviot—Its Source and Course—Teviotdale—A Legend of Branxholm—The Tributaries of the Teviot—The Bonny Lass of Branxholm—Ancient Times at Branxholm—The Laird of Goldieland—Harden Castle.

XIV.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 183

The Teviot and its Tributaries continued—The Town of Hawick—Minto—Denholm—Ruberslaw—Ancrum Bridge—The Water of Ale—An Angling Stream—The Village of Ancrum.

CHAP. PAGE

XV.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 195

The Teviot and its Tributaries—The River Jed—The Raid of Reidswire—The Castle of Ferniherst—Jedburgh and its Associations—Personal Reminiscences—The Kale Water—Roxburgh Castle and Historic Incidents—The Junction of the Teviot and the Tweed.

XVI.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 210

The Tweed joined by the Eden—A Melancholy Incident—The Birthplace of the Poet Thomson—The Eden a Trouting Stream—The Siege of Wark Castle—Angling Experiences on the Leet.

XVII.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 223

Coldstream and its Associations—The River Till—Norham Castle and its History—The authors "The Wolfe of Badenoch"—The Parish of Ladykirk—The Foremans—The Whitadder—A Legend of Gamelshiels Castle—The Fasteney—Manslaughter Law.

XVIII.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 240

The Whitadder continued—The Ruins of Edinshall—Remarks on the History and Nature of such Buildings—A Tragic Story of the Homes of Wedderburn—A Romance of Broomhouse—A Legend of Allanbank—Covenanting Reminiscences of Allanbank—The Whitadder joined by the Blackadder.

XIX.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Continued*), 254

The Blackadder—Westruther, its Etymology—Wedderlie—The Twinlaw Cairns—A Legend—Greenlaw, Fogo, and Langton—A fine old Ballad—The Blackadder joins the Whitadder.

XX.—THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES (*Concluded*), 264

The Whitadder again—The Old Keep of Hutton Hall—A Singular Monument—The Whitadder joins the Tweed—The Whitadder and Blackadder as Angling Streams—The Battle of Halidon Hill—Berwick-upon-Tweed—An Old Relic—The Abbey of Lindisfarne—Berwick Bay.

XXI.—THE TYNE, ... 272

The Tyne—Its Source—The Old Castle of Cakemuir—The Vicinity of the River—A Fox-hunting Reminiscence—Crichton Castle—The Family of Crichton—Historical Incidents—The Ramsays and the Hepburns—Description of the Castle—Marmion.

CHAP. PAGE

XXII.—THE TYNE (*Continued*), . . . 289

Crichton Church—The Lothian Bridge—Description of the View and Scenery—The Parish of Cranstoun—Prestonhall and Oxenford Castle—Lord Adam Gordon—Improvements at Oxenford Castle—The Estate of Cousland—The Dalrymple Family—The Village of Ormiston.

XXIII.—THE TYNE (*Continued*), . . . 299

Ormiston Hall, Woodhall, and Fountainhall—Description of Ormiston Hall—The Cockburns—The Dean—The Abundance of Wood, and of Animal Life—The Family of Orme.

XXIV.—THE TYNE (*Continued*), . . . 305

Wishart the Reformer at Haddington and Ormiston—Cardinal Beaton and Wishart—The Cockburn Family again—Elphinstone Tower—The Old House of Fountainhall—The Lauder Family—Curious Old Documents.

XXV.—THE TYNE (*Continued*), . . . 316

Winton—The Earls of Winton—The Manor of Pencaitland—The Village and Church of Pencaitland—Salton Water and Humbie Water—The Banks of Birn's Water—Salton Hall—The Fletchers of Salton—The Villages East and West Salton—Bishop Burnet—The Castle of Herdmanston.

XXVI.—THE TYNE (*Continued*), . . . 328

Tributaries of the Tyne—Marmion—Gifford—The House and Family of Coalston—Coalston Water—The Mansion of Lethington—The Family of Maitland—Clerkington.

XXVII.—THE TYNE (*Continued*), . . . 338

The Town of Haddington—The Abbey Church—Haddington as a Fortress—Interesting Historical Incidents—The Tyne at Haddington—Amisfield—The Wemyss Family—Stevenson and Beanston—The Vaults.

XXVIII.—THE TYNE (*Concluded*), . . . 346

Hailes Castle—Traprane Law—The Village of Linton—The Phantassie Property—Farming in the District—Angling—Tynningham Bridge and Tynningham House—Binning Wood—Remarkable Holly Hedges—St. Baldred—An Old Charter.